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Mexico's Many Antigones: Uncovering the Mexican tradition of Sophocles' *Antigone*

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Classics

by

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September 2022

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Mexico's Many Antigones: Uncovering the Mexican tradition of Sophocles' *Antigone*

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by

Andrés A. Carrete

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- Organized and coordinated translation efforts for the conference
 - Compiled report of potential translator fees and services for conference organizers
 - Recruited translators and volunteer assistants
 - Procured audio equipment for live translation

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- Organized and coordinated all advertisement efforts. This included overseeing social media presence, contacting local news outlets, and supervising the dissemination of physical advertising, i.e., flyers and posters

Service

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- Collated and synthesized graduate response to department’s anti-racism action plan
- Researched, synthesized, and published list of external fellowships for incoming and continuing Classics graduate students

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- Reported findings of research and created action plan for the rollout of the organizations multilingual (English, Spanish, and Portuguese) social media pages

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- Cooperated with steering committee to establish social media objectives and parameters

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ABSTRACT

Mexico's Many Antigones: Uncovering the Mexican tradition of Sophocles' *Antigone*

by

Andrés A. Carrete

This dissertation is a first step towards tracing and analyzing a distinctly Mexican tradition of adapting Sophocles' *Antigone*, starting in the second half of the 20th Century. It investigates the history of the ancient play in Mexico and establishes a corpus of 12 adaptations spanning from 1968 to 2015. Of these 12 plays, this project provides an in-depth analysis of three temporally spaced reimaginings of *Antigone* which best represent an appreciable shift in the use and character of the play within this national context. These three Mexican adaptations are José Fuentes Mares' *La joven Antígona se va a la Guerra* (1968), Olga Harmony's *La ley de Creón* (1984), and Perla de la Rosa's *Antígona: las voces que incendian el desierto* (2004). The content chapters of this thesis examine these *Antigone* at length, remarking on their accomplishments, sociohistorical contexts, and their unique contributions to the history of *Antigone* in Mexico. These chapters interrogate each play's engagement with ideas of resistance, revolution, resilience, and refusal as well as their deployment and negotiation of gender and class dynamics.

By examining these three plays and the trajectory they represent, this project interrogates major trends and remarks on the difficulty of making definitive statements about a tradition, even one as small and condensed as this. Informed by the larger corpus of *Antigones* in Mexico, the conclusion of this project attempts to analyze the progression of

Antigone within this national context by considering it against the backdrop of pivotal moments in the country's history. It argues that these plays challenge scholarly assumptions about the global history of *Antigone* as well as anticipate arguments and readings later made by powerful scholars in the fields of Classics and classical receptions. The analysis of these plays and their accompanying corpus serves to argue in favor of more specific and culturally informed approaches to reception. It likewise aims to support the inclusion of these plays and their surrounding scholarship into the broader discourse of reception, imagining a future for scholarship unrestricted by regional and linguistic barriers.

The totality of this project aims to highlight a trajectory of cultural engagement by conceiving of these *Antigones* born from Mexico as the seeds of a tradition. In so doing, it aims to provide a point of departure from which future scholarship may go on to distinguish whether these engagements differ significantly from comparable counterparts throughout Latin America and other contexts. This study is an attempt to uncover a tradition, engage with its particularities, and hopefully invite further interest in the national contexts which compose our larger operational categories.

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I. Introduction

Antigone and its Resonance

The *Antigone* of Sophocles possesses a cultural staying power which transcends barriers of time, place, language, and culture. The play's ability to humanize and articulate ethical impasses has inspired a global tradition which seeks to adapt its narrative in order to represent and explore a multitude of societal issues. Through *Antigone*, communities from all over the world are able to make their suffering intelligible, interrogate the ethics of institutions and movements, or even inspire collective action in moments of crisis. As the interest in *Antigone* grows, it becomes especially important to listen to the diversity represented in the many contexts of its reception. The purpose of this thesis is to highlight one such context and uncover the Mexican reception of Sophocles' *Antigone*.

Sophocles' ancient tragedy, which details Antigone's plight to bury her disgraced brother in defiance of state power, has captivated audiences for generations.¹ The arguments of Antigone and her uncle Creon have for centuries motivated ethical and philosophical debates which strike at the very core of the human experience. Hegel's influential readings of the *Antigone*, for example, have inspired readers to consider the play in terms of dialectical oppositions. Although problematic in many respects, Hegel's readings of the *Antigone* have a dominance and staying power that have colored later interpretations of the play.² Through Hegel, we are invited to consider the ethical friction born from the play's binaries (the state and the individual, male and female, private and public, divine mandates

¹ For this project, I have used Griffith ed. 1999 as a source text in Greek, and Blondell 2001 as a reference in English. All translations from Greek and Spanish throughout the project are my own.

² For more on Hegel's legacy and interpretations following Hegel see Thompson 2014, Rawlinson 2014, and accompanying bibliographies.

and mortal law, etc.) as contests of right vs. right. The tragedy born from the unyielding positions of Antigone and Creon has given the play a continued appeal due to its ability to represent diametric oppositions while showcasing the merits and pitfalls of their corresponding ethical frameworks.

The almost equivalent sympathies evoked through this play, despite its staging of diametric oppositions, have allowed it to exist in moments of great cultural dissonance without necessarily invoking the wrath of established power. Jean Anouilh's famous *Antigone* (1944), for example, operated within the play's parameters of ethical tension and was able to be staged during the Nazi occupation of France during WW2.³ The play was an intelligible instance of defiance but simultaneously celebrated by those in power as affirming the status quo. It has been interpreted by critics as deeply political due to its depiction of Antigone's rebellion against Creon, a character portrayed sympathetically but associated with German power in its reception.⁴ Such a display has elevated the importance of *Antigone* and allowed it to operate as a play of great political import.

Similarly, Bertolt Brecht's take on *Antigone*, which was written during his exile in Switzerland and not performed until 1948, adapts the ancient Sophoclean narrative as an allegorical tale with a strong resonance for a post-war audience.⁵ Brecht's Creon is not an ambiguous figure acting in what he believes to be the state's best interest. He is instead a tyrant and dictator who wages war for his own gain and despite the pain caused to his people. Famously, Brecht's *Antigone* begins with a prologue set in Berlin, wherein a pair of sisters discover the hanging body of their brother. The man has been executed for desertion. In providing a platform to interrogate contemporary politics, both of these *Antigones*

³ Anouilh 2002.

⁴ Mueller & Henao Castro 2012.

⁵ Brecht et al. 1990.

become foundational for the reception of the Sophoclean tragedy in the modern world. Adaptations following these *Antigones* see the ancient heroine recontextualized and reimagined in a multitude of scenarios.

George Steiner's influential 1984 book *Antigones* claims that the ancient Sophoclean play is the world's most adapted and reimagined Greek tragedy.⁶ In this book, Steiner explores the reception and legacy of Sophocles' *Antigone* as represented in European and Anglophone cultures and thought. Although focused primarily on 18th and 19th century reception of the ancient tragedy, the book demonstrates *Antigone*'s resonance across a multiplicity of media and cultures. Time has shown, however, that *Antigone*'s reach expands far beyond the contexts examined by Steiner. The face and plight of Antigone have gradually changed to correspond with the needs and circumstances of the play's readers and playwrights. This has in turn expanded the cultural work and theoretical productions born from contact with the ancient play. In Bonnie Honig's works, for example, *Antigone* has been used to theorize about sorority and refusal as methodologies for resisting oppressive patriarchal systems.⁷ Feminist readings of *Antigone* have utilized aspects of the play to theorize and negotiate the social roles of women, divestment from patriarchal systems, and queer politics.⁸ Increasingly, *Antigone* is used to reconsider resistance by centering oppressed voices beyond colonial frameworks.⁹

Increasingly, adaptations and reimaginings of the ancient tragedy have focused on Antigone's heroic character. Antigone has become an icon of resistance and an emblem of the disenfranchised for choosing to speak truth to power despite personal cost. In his discussion of *Antigone* in Latin America, for example, Argentinian scholar Romulo

⁶ Steiner 1996.

⁷ Honig 2013 & 2021.

⁸ Ed. Söderbäck 2012.

⁹ Henao Castro 2022

Pianacci, has characterized Antigone as an unambiguously heroic figure who resists powerful systems in favor of the marginalized.¹⁰ *Antigone* is effectively a vessel through which playwrights are able to mark and articulate the suffering and societal failings affecting their communities. This in turn has allowed the corpus of adaptations of the ancient play to expand almost immeasurably.

The reception of Sophocles' *Antigone* has progressively reflected a diversity of people and circumstances that extends far beyond its roots. The play has achieved an intersectional character which allows it to represent complicated social issues in a highly nuanced and humanizing manner. Although the mythical foundations of the character and narrative may be preserved, *Antigone* now functions to discuss issues like social inequality born from race relations, the plight of queer communities in the margins, extremism and radicalization, the ethics surrounding the burial of enemy combatants in an age of terrorism, and human resilience and suffering in the context of criminalized migrations.¹¹ The face of Antigone is everchanging, but her story continues to have a resonance and meaning that transcends borders and social strata. I believe it is fair to say that there is a global tradition of adapting *Antigone* to represent the plight of the marginalized and to resist the encroachment of oppressive structures of power.

As the corpus of *Antigone* adaptations grows, so does the diversity of the circumstances which inform each play's development. Understandably, our study of these adaptations is largely guided by wide operational categories which allow us to consider

¹⁰ Pianacci 2015.

¹¹ The Theater of War's *Antigone in Ferguson* (2016) uses the intersectional potential of *Antigone* to discuss issues ranging from racialized violence and police brutality to gender-based violence and social justice. JJ Sutton's *Antigone: A New Trans Play* (2021) adapts the Sophoclean narrative to tell a story of transition and resistance while centering trans voices. Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017) rewrites *Antigone* from a Pakistani-British perspective, examining notions of cultural tension and the conditions which lead to radicalization, all while centering empathy and humanism without excusing violent actions. Marc David Pinate's *Antigone at the Border* (2022) adapts *Antigone* to voice the struggles of immigrant families affected by the United States' DACA policies.

reception as delimited by geographical and sociopolitical constraints. Useful categories like ‘Latin America reception’, ‘West African reception’, or ‘East Asian reception’ of Greco-Roman antiquity have facilitated our understanding of the relationship between cultural contexts and cultural productions. Although these categories allow us to incorporate a great number of works under a functional umbrella, thus simplifying their propagation and interpretation, it is possible that narrowing the scope of our categories can yield productive engagements and uncover contributions and accomplishments that might otherwise be overlooked or understudied. In keeping with this line of thought, I have developed this project as a first step towards uncovering and investigating a Mexican tradition of adapting Sophocles’ *Antigone*.

In narrowing its scope to Mexico, this project will trace the reception of Sophocles’ *Antigone* in the country starting in the second half of the 20th century. In this introduction, I delineate the chronology of plays which adapt Sophocles’ ancient tragedy and provide my findings regarding their plot and staging, as well as additional contextualizing information. The content chapters of this thesis examine three Mexican adaptations of *Antigone* at length, remarking on their accomplishments, sociohistorical contexts, and their unique contributions to the history of *Antigone* in Mexico. In the chapters, I interrogate each play’s engagement with ideas of resistance, revolution, resilience, and refusal as well as their deployment and negotiation of gender and class dynamics. I have chosen three plays that are temporally spaced, and which I believe best represent an appreciable shift in the use and character of *Antigone* within this national context. In short, I am hoping to highlight a trajectory of cultural engagement by conceiving of these *Antigones* born from Mexico as the seeds of a tradition. In so doing, I aim to provide a point of departure from which future scholarship may go on to distinguish whether these engagements differ significantly from comparable

counterparts throughout Latin America and other contexts. This study is an attempt to uncover a tradition, engage with its particularities, and hopefully invite further interest in the national contexts which compose our larger operational categories.

Antigone in Latin America

The global reception of *Antigone* as well as that of Latin America has received an increasing amount of attention over the last decade. In the broadest of senses, volumes like the Mee & Foley edited *Antigone on the Contemporary World Stage* have become great resources for bringing awareness to Sophocles' *Antigone*'s continued life beyond Greece and Rome and Anglo-European spheres.¹² Said volume in particular investigates the theatrical presence of *Antigone* with special emphasis on performance as a medium for showcasing the play's shifting character throughout the world. Longitudinal studies have likewise advanced our understanding of *Antigone* and its reception by sketching out and highlighting remarkable adaptations of the play which have been historically overlooked or understudied. Speaking specifically to *Antigone* in Latin America, Romulo Pianacci's *Antígona: Una Tragedia Latinoamericana* is arguably the most comprehensive study of this sort.¹³ Pianacci's project provides a wide-ranging survey of Latin American *Antigones* from a variety of places and time periods. His writing divides and catalogs adaptations of *Antigone* by country. It then provides contextualizing information and plot summaries as well as quick and concise analyses of the plays.

¹² Mee & Foley 2011. In addition to this volume, the Spanish language *Contemporaneidad de los clásicos en el umbral del tercer milenio* (1999) edited by Alvarez Morán & Iglesias attempts a similar feat but extends beyond a single play to offer a survey of multiple engagements with Greco-Roman antiquity in the Spanish-speaking world. The Andújar and Nikoloutsos edited *Greeks and Romans on the Latin American Stage* (2020) likewise approaches Latin American reception of specifically Greek Drama. Beyond bringing awareness to the breadth of Latin American engagements with Greco-Roman classics, this volume provides profound analyses of these engagements through a variety of theoretical and interdisciplinary perspectives. Jesse Weiner's chapter from this volume will feature heavily in Chapter IV of this dissertation.

¹³ Pianacci 2015.

Pianacci's project is very important due to its care, scope, and range. To say that my investigation of *Antigone* is indebted to Pianacci would be an understatement. However, Pianacci's project offers little in terms of analysis as it is most invested in providing contextualizing information, plot summaries, and comparisons of motifs across Latin American *Antigones*. Beyond providing an overview of major themes and motifs, Pianacci's work appears to be a concerted effort to bring attention to the history of *Antigone* in the region.¹⁴ This is a necessary endeavor given the delayed interests in the reception of classics, and *Antigone* in particular, as it exists in the global south. Due to the lack of basic groundwork surrounding many of these adaptations of *Antigone*, studies like that of Pianacci are tasked with providing foundational information in order to make future critical work accessible. This means scholars who lay these foundations are compelled to approach subjects broadly. In Pianacci's case, this results in a discernable drive to produce a cohesive picture of a singular Latin American *Antigone* tradition or interpretation.

The drive to present a unified and representative interpretation of *Antigone* in Latin America is relatively widespread and goes well beyond Pianacci. Before Pianacci, María del Carmen Bosch explored the reception and presence of Sophocles' *Antigone* in the Spanish-speaking world.¹⁵ Her analysis takes strong cues from George Steiner and observes thematic concerns, tropes, and characterizations that are presented as common to the reception of *Antigone* in the Spanish-speaking world.¹⁶ Bosch offers summarized excerpts from various Ibero-American adaptations of *Antigone* and likewise sees her interpretations guided towards a unifying conception of *Antigone* as she appears in the world beyond the Anglo-

¹⁴ The plays explored in Pianacci's book typically receive two to seven pages of attention each. Within that space, Pianacci provides historical contexts, information about the playwrights, plot summaries, and an overview of major themes and motifs.

¹⁵ Bosch 1999.

¹⁶ Steiner 1996 is largely influential for analyses of this sort and is even credited by playwrights like Perla De la Rosa as instrumental for their reading and understanding of *Antigone*.

European gaze. Comparatist scholar Moira Fradinger has engaged with *Antigone* in Latin America in various modes and around different thematic concepts but likewise endeavors to establish commonalities across regional contexts, (i.e., *Antigone* is consistently and constantly depicted as a mother figure in Latin America).¹⁷ Actor, director, and scholar Juan David González Betancur has written about *Antigone*'s importance in Latin America by depicting the play's influence on political theater. However, his study is limited in its scope and filters the entire reception of *Antigone* in Latin America primarily through two plays.¹⁸

In more recent years, works like those of Jennifer Duprey and Andrés Henao Castro have expanded the depth of political analysis based around the figure of *Antigone* and its reception in Latin America. The collection edited by Jennifer Duprey, *Whose Voice is This? Iberian and Latin American Antigones* (2013), utilizes the reception of *Antigone* in Ibero-America in an effort to trace a transatlantic history of *Antigone* as a tool for facing structures of violence and power. This collection of essays explores a great variety of regions and subject matters. It interprets the many iterations of *Antigone* as responses to failed political utopias and the collective trauma born from dishonest political regimes. The vastness of regional contexts explored in the volume necessarily suppresses the exceptionality of individual cultures despite, and perhaps as a consequence of, the pertinence of its organizing principle. Political scientist Andrés Henao Castro has similarly published an important monograph detailing the political reception of *Antigone* in Latin America as it affects marginalized groups, the disenfranchised, and the dispossessed from a decolonial and intersectional perspective.¹⁹ His volume is especially attuned to the status of metics and slaves. It breaks from the norm by deemphasizing citizens in its readings of *Antigone*, a

¹⁷ On rewritings of *Antigone* in Latin America, see Fradinger 2014 and 2018. Moira Fradinger's work is significant for the continued study of *Antigone* in Latin America.

¹⁸ González Betancur 2010. This study centers the Argentinian *Antígona Vélez* by Leopoldo Marechal and the Puerto Rican *La pasión según Antígona Pérez*, by Luis Rafael Sánchez.

groundbreaking reframing given the role of classical drama for negotiating and practicing Athenian citizenship. In foregrounding marginalized social strata, this volume uses *Antigone* to theorize about militant forms of mourning in the global south in the context of multivariate and cumulative systems of oppressions. Despite the importance of their contributions, these works all veer towards the general in their apprehension of *Antigone* as a method for voicing and conceptualizing resistance in Latin America, namely in that they conceive of Latin America and the global south as a largely uniform entity.

My impulse to investigate the Mexican tradition of *Antigone* follows in the footsteps of these studies, albeit within the more constrained parameters of a national tradition. Accounting for the distinctive national and regional cultural elements that inform each of the adaptations analyzed in this thesis, I aim to showcase some of the interpretations and contributions which can be overlooked or deprioritized when not seen through a distinctly Mexican lens. The results of this study should not detract from our deployment of broader categories. Instead, it can serve to inform their component parts, thereby increasing their utility and nuancing their deployment. By better understanding the elemental building blocks of our categories, we can achieve a better sense of their ensuing totalities.

Mexican *Antigones*

No longitudinal studies have been devoted to the specific reception of *Antigone* in Mexico. Pianacci's 2015 volume, mentioned above, is the closest scholarship has come to representing the history of *Antigone* in Mexico in a comprehensive manner. Pianacci focuses his attention on five adaptations of *Antigone* and uses them to trace an evolution of the play

¹⁹ Henaó Castro 2022.

as a response to failed political institutions in contemporary times.²⁰ In an effort to expand upon Pianacci's work, I here offer a brief overview of Mexico's *Antigones* and provide a survey of seven adaptations of the Sophoclean play in addition to the five represented in Pianacci's book. In this survey, I include chronologies, basic plot details, author information, details about each play's original contexts and staging, as well as point out scholarship pertaining to the plays where available. As I will provide a fuller sketch of three *Antigones* I have selected for this project, I will refrain from delivering a full breakdown of their complexities and accomplishments in this survey.

The history of *Antigone* in Mexico likely begins with Teatro Orientación in the 1930s, an avantgarde theatre responsible for most of the early productions of Greek Drama in Mexico.²¹ A decade after the end of the Mexican Revolution, this theater staged the *Antigone* of French playwright Jean Cocteau in 1932. The plot of this play, at least as staged in Mexico, is reported to be a streamlined version of Sophocles' *Antigone*, as if from a bird's eye view.²² Teatro Orientación's productions were part of an attempt to create a cosmopolitan theater with an expressed interest in showcasing classical plays and foreign playwrights. The presentation of a French production of *Antigone* introduces the character to Mexican stages. However, *Antigone* would not find itself adapted by Mexican playwrights until the second half of the 20th Century.²³

²⁰ See Pianacci 2015 pp. 222-248 in which Pianacci gives a quick overview of Mexican history as well as his survey of five Mexican adaptations of *Antigone*. The adaptations are those of José Fuentes Mares, Olga Harmony, Ricardo Andrade Jardí, Perla de la Rosa, and Alicia Pacheco Álvarez.

²¹ Argudín 1986 is an important volume chronicling the history of Mexican theater from its inception to the late 20th century. The Olguín edited *Un Siglo de Teatro en México* (2017) provides an excellent collection of essays detailing the development and change seen in Mexico's theater during the 20th Century.

²² See Barrenechea 2015 in Boshier, Macintosh, McConnell, & Rankine ed. Teatro Orientación housed a number of adaptations of Greek Tragedy, including those of Alfonso Reyes from the famous Ateneo de la Juventud (more on this below).

²³ The first adaptation of *Antigone* in Latin America appears to be Leopoldo Marechal's Argentinian *Antígona Vélez* (1951). This adaptation was commissioned by the Teatro Nacional Cervantes under the Peronist establishment and is said to have been directly encouraged by Eva Perón herself (see Pianacci 2105, esp. 115-121). For more on this play's politics, see Werth 2013.

There is an explosion of interest in adapting *Antigone* throughout Latin America and Mexico in the second half of the 20th century. This is most likely a result of two pivotal adaptations of the ancient Sophoclean play which showcase its potential as a tool for political messaging and resistance. These are the previously mentioned European *Antigones* of Bertolt Brecht and Jean Anouilh.²⁴ The popularity of Anouilh's *Antigone* and Brecht's *Sophocles' Antigone*, affords them an elevated position in the global tradition of *Antigone's* reception. For playwrights adapting *Antigone* in the second half of the 20th century and beyond, Anouilh and Brecht become as important as Sophocles. In many instances, they become the source texts through which playwrights engage with the ancient tragedy.²⁵ In others, they are read alongside the Sophoclean original and concurrently influence the development of new adaptations.

Mee and Foley attribute Anouilh's worldwide influence and popularity to his play's ability to "domesticate and modernize" the play's conflicts.²⁶ By domestication, I surmise the volume refers to the play's ability to make the action on stage present and relevant for sociopolitical issues affecting a specific community or sphere. Beyond bringing the story to contemporaneity, Anouilh is read as infusing his play with the political tension of his era.²⁷ This particular feature is readily found in a vast number of adaptations of the ancient play, and especially so in those which directly confront modern social realities. Brecht's influence is most visible in his theatrical techniques and political positioning.²⁸ In my opinion, Brecht's most influential contribution is his use of the prologue, through which the audience is given a contemporary or highly resonant sociohistorical lens which will then prime their

²⁴ Brecht et al.1990 and Anouilh 2012.

²⁵ See Mee & Foley 2011, especially Ch. 1 'Mobilizing *Antigone*'.

²⁶ See Mee & Foley 2011 p. 45.

²⁷ See Mueller & Henao Castro 2012.

²⁸ Mee & Foley ed. 2011.

interpretation of the ensuing drama.²⁹ In Pianacci's view, the influence of these two plays is visible throughout the Latin American corpus of *Antigone* adaptations. However, Pianacci argues that this is a result of the plays' ubiquity and accessibility via publication.³⁰ These plays transform and color the reception of *Antigone* in the modern world as a direct consequence of their availability in public libraries, universities, and through their regular staging. It is therefore no wonder that the *Antigones* of Mexico will see themselves greatly influenced by these European predecessors. This will definitely be the case for the *Antigones* at the core of this project.

Tracing a Tradition

Uncovering the tradition of staging *Antigone* in Mexico presents some challenges. For one, many theatrical productions are unedited and unpublished, which makes ascertaining their plot and contextualizing information a difficult task. In compiling the following chronology, I have resorted to archival research when possible but have more heavily depended on the generosity of playwrights and their networks as well as previous scholarship and local news sources.³¹ Many of the plays in this chronology find records of their productions documented in local newspapers or blogs but do not appear to exist in their full form or in formats that would permit a more profound engagement. The following chronology comprises all Mexican *Antigones* of which I am aware. It is possible that despite my best efforts I have overlooked smaller adaptations of the play. Nevertheless, I here

²⁹ The influence of Brecht's prologue will be visible in both Fuentes Mares and De la Rosa's *Antigones*. I will remark on this in the corresponding chapters.

³⁰ See Pianacci 2015, esp. pp 87-100. Alongside these *Antigones* Pianacci lists those of Jean Cocteau (1922) Slavador Espiru (1932), and José Bergamín (1955) as widely available European *Antigones* in Latin America. Furthermore, he mentions George Steiner's 1984 study as potentially influential and wide-reaching but laments its exclusion of any Latin American works.

³¹ Archival research was conducted primarily in Ciudad Juárez Chihuahua with some resources from the Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez's library.

include a chronology based on my findings with details on how to procure the plays in the notes wherever relevant.

The first major adaptation of *Antigone* in Mexico is José Fuentes Mares' *La joven Antígona se va a la Guerra* (1968).³² Written by a scholar of the Mexican Revolution based out of the Universidad Autónoma de Chihuahua, this adaptation reimagines Antigone as the newest member of an organization seeking to overthrow the government. The adaptation was first performed on October 10, 1968 in the auditorium of the Universidad Autónoma de Chihuahua (UACH) to a university and public audience. The play was acted by the Universidad de Chihuahua Theatre Group and directed by Fernando Saavedra. It does not feature prominently in Anglophone scholarship save for short plot summaries and mentions of historical context.³³ In Latin American scholarship, this work is summarized and discussed, but this is done in terms that iron out its unique accomplishments.³⁴ The immediate audience response to this play appears to be rather tepid, as will be explored in the first chapter of this project. The playwright himself expresses regret at the play's reception and the politicizing impulse of its audience. I have found no evidence of the play's life beyond its initial staging.

Fuentes Mares is followed by Olga Harmony and her adaptation *La ley de Creón* (1984).³⁵ Olga Harmony was one of Mexico's most important theater critics, as well as a playwright and novelist. Harmony's importance to Mexico's theatrical culture cannot be understated. She is credited with elevating the practice of theatrical criticism in the country. Theater and philosophy scholar Ana Laura Santamaría describes Harmony as Mexico's first

³² The dates in parentheses refer to each play's known date of staging. Fuentes Mares' play is available in a volume alongside two additional plays. For a full bibliographical note see Fuentes Mares 1969.

³³ In an appendix to Mee & Foley 2015, Moira Fradinger provides a brief summary of the play's plot as does Weiner 2015.

³⁴ Alvarez Morán & Iglesias 1999, Pianacci 2015, and Fradinger 2018.

professional theater critic.³⁶ Written in 1974 and first performed in 1984 under the Universidad Veracruzana's production, Harmony's play was met positively and received general praise nationwide.³⁷ As is unfortunately the case with some of the documentary evidence for this project, reports of this adaptation's production are somewhat contradictory. Malkah Rabell seems closest to the source, reporting for a local newspaper at the time of the play's initial staging. According to Rabell, Harmony's play received the Mexican theatre critic association's 'Juan Ruiz de Alarcón Prize' for best play by a national author in 1974. It premiered on stage in 1984 under the direction of Manuel Montoro. Other reports, namely those discussing Harmony's career posthumously, state that this prize was instead received in 1984 alongside its stage production. Given its critical success, it is curious that this iteration of *Antigone* has been largely overlooked as an important instance of reception.³⁸ The play shows little evidence of being staged beyond its initial run and has gone relatively unnoticed by scholars and critics.

Following these adaptations, *Antigone* appears to absent herself from the stage until the year 2000 with Ricardo Andrade Jardí's *Los Motivos de Antígona* (2000).³⁹ Andrade Jardí is the co-founder and director of Merida, Yucatán's Centro de investigación escénica

³⁵ This play is available through the Universidad Veracruzana's theatrical publication Tramoya. See Harmony 2001.

³⁶ See Santamaría 2018. Harmony wrote for Mexican newspapers including 'La Jornada' and Excelsior'. She wrote the novel *Los limones* (1984), a memoir - *Memorias* (2006), and penned the plays *Nuevo Día* (1955), and *La ley de Creón* (2001). For more on Harmony and her legacy see Montañó Garfias 2014 and Martínez 2018.

³⁷ Rabell 1984

³⁸ This is one of the adaptations included in Pianacci's 2015 study. However, Pianacci is highly critical of the play's length and repetition, ideas which will be examined in the corresponding chapter. Concerned primarily with Argentinian adaptations in her chapter, Moira Fradinger (2014) provides a very brief summary of this adaptation. Gustavo Herrera Díaz (2014) includes this play as part of a list of classical Greco-Roman works adapted in the Caribbean. It is not clear to me why this play is categorized in this manner. Harmony's play is listed alongside those of José Fuentes Mares and Andrade Jardí (see below).

³⁹ In English, *Antigone's Motives*. This play is unedited and not published in any form. However, the playwright has generously provided a copy of the play to inform this project. Evidence suggests this play was largely self-funded.

‘El Teatrito’ (the Center for Stage Research ‘The Little Theater’).⁴⁰ His adaptation of *Antigone* is essentially an extended monologue, which magnifies Antigone’s final moments under a confinement culminating in her suicide. Through her speech, Antigone meditates upon the arbitrary nature of law, duty, and morality. She speaks of Ismene and Haemon and asks for their forgiveness. Antigone laments the life she will not live but ultimately provides two reasons for her suicide – love and dreams. In a world where she cannot exercise the former or follow the latter due to confinement and the oppressions of tyranny, death appears as a sensible option. This *Antigone* is vague in its setting and temporality but resonates with issues of unjust imprisonment, state violence, and the condition of women in contemporary Mexico.

The immediate reception to this play does not appear to have been favorable. There are no concrete details about the play’s first staging. The unedited copy of the play lists Santo Tomás Ajusco, near Mexico City, as important but provides no additional details. Evidence suggests the play premiered in Mérida, Yucatán as a first attempt to ignite an alternative theater scene in the region.⁴¹ This attempt was met with some criticism given that it did not attract a large audience. Writing a spotlight of ‘El Teatrito’ and the trajectory of its co-founders, Jéssica Zambrano reports audiences of approximately 20 people for the theater’s early performances, which included Jardí’s *Antigone*. Little has been written about this play, likely as a result of its tepid reception and its lack of availability.⁴² Alongside Pianacci, who summarize and contextualizes this piece, Gustavo Herrera Díaz lists it as a part of his corpus of Caribbean theatrical adaptations of Greco-Roman works.⁴³

⁴⁰ Pianacci 2015 p. 228 and Zambrano 2019. Andrade Jardí is co-founder alongside Amanda Quezadas.

⁴¹ See Telégrafo 2019.

⁴² Pianacci 2015 summarizes the play and gives contextualizing information about piece and playwright.

⁴³ Herrera Díaz 2014. Herrera Díaz attempts to concretize a corpus of Caribbean adaptations of Greco-Roman works from an Ibero-American perspective.

Andrade Jardí's *Antigone* is followed by Perla de la Rosa's *Antígona: las voces que incendian el desierto* (2004), which will be explored fully in Chapter IV this dissertation. Perla De la Rosa is an accomplished playwright, actress, and director based out of Ciudad Juárez. She is a recent winner of the nation's excellence in dramaturgy Juan Ruiz de Alarcón award, a distinction she shares with Olga Harmony.⁴⁴ This *Antigone* was originally staged in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua in 2004. With De la Rosa as director, her play was produced under the initiative 'Proyecto de Teatros para la Comunidad Teatral' with support from the Mexican social security institute (IMSS), the National Council for Culture (CONACULTA), and the National Fund for Arts and Cultures (FONCA).⁴⁵ The play has been well received, earning an award from the National Program of Scholarly Theater for the 2004-2005 term, and has been staged repeatedly in different cities. In 2018, it was staged in the US with English subtitles by the University of Wisconsin -Madison's Spanish and Portuguese Department.⁴⁶ De la Rosa's play has also garnered the attention of scholarship and finds itself summarized in various collections and volumes. Classicist Jesse Weiner has been the leading voice analyzing this play and has published an article and a book chapter with his findings.⁴⁷

In the same year, 2004, Alejandro Carrillo Castro's *El Rey Creón – Tragedia al estilo Griego* (*King Creon: A Greek-styled Tragedy*) hits the stage. Despite my attempts, I have found no text or summary of this play. It is listed among adaptations of classical works

⁴⁴ Redaccion Nortedigital 2022.

⁴⁵ De la Rosa 2004, p. 171.

⁴⁶ The translation used for these subtitles is not publicly available. For a summary of the production, see <https://spanport.wisc.edu/2018/04/16/antigona-las-vozes-que-incendian-el-desierto/>

⁴⁷ See Weiner 2015 and 2020.

in a couple of publications, but aside from the record of a 2017 performance in Mexico City no additional details about the play are available.⁴⁸

Gabriela Ynclán's *Podrías llamarte Antígona* (2009) follows Perla de la Rosa's and Alejandro Carrillo Castro in our chronology.⁴⁹ Like De la Rosa's play, as we will see, Ynclán's *Antigone* is highly specific and addresses a localized crisis. The play is a reaction to the state's negligence following a tragic mining incident in Coahuila, Mexico.⁵⁰ This incident claimed the lives of 65 carbon miners, who were buried alive due to a gas explosion. The incident was neglected by the state. The miners received no assistance and were left to die without hope of rescue. Ynclán's play revisits this incident through a young woman named Analía, who after three years braves the site of the incident to retrieve her brother's corpse. Analía runs afoul of the state authorities, who are attempting to conceal their culpability in the incident. She is sentenced to imprisonment and dies in jail but not before inciting a series of events which will lead to the tyrant's downfall.

Ynclán's *Antigone* was first staged in August of 2009 in the Foro Cultural Coyoacanense Hugo Argüelles.⁵¹ Like Andrade Jardí's play, Ynclán's adaptation is unedited. Formerly available via a repository of Mexican dramaturgy, the play is now known mainly through a summary written by classical philologist Helena González-Vaquerizo.⁵² Unlike Andrade Jardí, however, reception of this play is recorded to have been largely successful. González-Vaquerizo tells us of rehearsed readings of the play before the

⁴⁸ Mexico City's El Colegio Nacional has record of a 2017 performance of this play via blogpost. The play is listed in Rodríguez et al.'s *Clásicos en escena ayer y hoy* (2019) and Godoy Navarro 2020.

⁴⁹ In English, *You Could be Named Antigone*. Translating less literally but more idiomatically, the title is in effect 'you might as well be named Antigone'.

⁵⁰ González Vaquerizo 2014.

⁵¹ This play was supported by the Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres (The National Women's Institute) and Tepalcate Productions, a coalition of writers, actors, directors, and playwrights interested in advancing theatrical culture in the country.

⁵² My attempts to procure a copy of this play through direct contact with the playwright have been unsuccessful. Consequently, González-Vaquerizo's work from 2014 has been instrumental for the writing of

families of miners affected by the incident in Coahuila. These are said to have had a high emotional resonance and a good reception overall. Ynclan's play has gone largely unnoticed by scholarship beyond González-Vaquerizo analysis and summary.

Written in 2009, Bárbara Colio's *Usted está aquí* adapts the story of *Antigone* to stage a mother's plight in search of her kidnapped son.⁵³ This play offers a complex usage of temporality and space in its narrative. Initially following the guidelines of the state, Ana García (this play's Antigone character) decides to take matters into her own hands in search of her child. This play traces Ana's journey and interlaces it with the media's coverage of unnatural events (a mass exodus of birds fleeing Thebes, a heatwave, drought, etc.) as well as a brief fascination with Ana and her search. The play is explicit in its narrations of the abuse and suffering endured by all those affected by the violence, death, and brutality enabled by a system which treats life as expendable and allows such atrocities to go on with impunity. At its core, the play denounces desensitization and acceptance towards violence in Mexico. Its end is frustrated. It shows a disconcerted Ana wishing to address the audience at the end of her journey only to remain speechless.

Colio's play appears to have been first staged in the Teatro Benito Juárez, Mexico City in June 2010 under the direction of Lorena Maza.⁵⁴ Like Ynclan's *Antigone*, this adaptation is absent from Pianacci's volume. However, it has received attention from some Anglophone scholarship. Two important pieces have been written about this play. M. Florencia Nelli (2012) and Margarita Vargas (2013) both analyze the play's context, themes, and politics. Although I have not found concrete evidence of restagings, Colio's play

this section. In her summary and analysis of the play, she lists a link to the play as available for download. Unfortunately, the link is now broken, and the website appears to no longer be operating.

⁵³ In English, *You Are Here*. This play is available for download in Spanish and French (for a fee) through the playwright's website <https://www.barbaracolio.com/obras>

⁵⁴ See Nelli 2012.

appears to have some life beyond its immediate reception. The playwright's webpage indicates she is willing to allow the restaging of her play given the proper permissions.

Alicia Pacheco's *Antígona, habibi* (2011) transports the myth to the Middle East to explore the abuses levied against Mexican and Middle Eastern women.⁵⁵ As far as Mexican *Antígones* go, this play follows Sophocles most closely in its narrative and choices.⁵⁶ This adaptation makes gender its primary concern while also delving into issues of American interventionism. The play has an almost journalistic quality and explicitly denounces the encroachment of masculinity and violent applications of *machismo* in the Middle East and Mexico through a sort of double-blind spatiality.⁵⁷ Similar to Fuentes Mares, this play was written, staged, and supported through an academic institution, the Universidad Veracruzana, where Pacheco Alvarez is a professor. It was first staged in March of 2011 at the Foro Fernando Torre Lapham, part of the theater faculty of the Universidad Veracruzana.⁵⁸ Beyond a summary and brief analysis from Pianacci, this play has flown under the radar of major scholarship.

Julia Arnaut's *Antígona: rápida y furiosa* (*Antigone: Fast and Furious*) hit stages in 2012. This production sees Antigone reimagined as a cabaret performance. Little information is available about this performance beyond a description of its parallels between Sophocles and 21st century Mexico in a bulletin announcing the end of its theatrical run.⁵⁹

Condemning the wave of violence and destruction caused by the state's drug war, Sara Uribe's *Antígona González* (2012) uses the Antigone myth to express the unfathomable

⁵⁵ This play is available through the Universidad Veracruzana's theatrical publication Tramoya. See Pacheco Álvarez 2012.

⁵⁶ The story beats of Pacheco's play do not deviate in a major way from those of Sophocles. The burial of Polynices, Antigone's defiance of Creon's decree, the deaths of Antigone and Haemon, and Creon's downfall are all retained in this adaptation. This play's points of interest lie rather on how it uses a familiar narrative to highlight and critique modern issues.

⁵⁷ Pianacci 2015 p. 249.

⁵⁸ As of the writing of this introduction, a full recording of this play is available via YouTube at <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=US3VxWRIINM>>. See nueveluna lun 2014.

grief of those searching for disappeared loved ones in Mexico. The play stages many of the issues affecting Mexico in modern times but can be read primarily as an intervention on narcotraffic, the war on drugs, and the accompanying violent consequences afflicting the citizens caught in such a landscape. In this narrative, the titular character is depicted as searching for her disappeared brother Tadeo, a likely victim of drug violence. The play ends with an interrogation of the audience as Antígona's journey leads her to a mass grave containing the bodies of multiple people believed to be the victims of narco-related violence.

This play has garnered a significant amount of attention from Anglophone and Spanish language scholarship and theater. The play began as a commission to Sara Uribe from actress Sandra Muñoz, who would go on to codirect the play's theatrical performances alongside Marcial Salinas.⁶⁰ Uribe's play was first staged in April of 2012 in Tampico, Tamaulipas and was published as a book in December of the same year. An English translation of this play was published in 2016.⁶¹ Scholarship surrounding the play has discussed everything from its use as a narconarrative to its choices regarding geography, culture, and Sophoclean intertexts in its exploration of persistent societal woes.⁶²

Lila Aviles' *Antígona unipersonal (Unipersonal Antigone)*, appears to have been staged in Mexico City's Teatro El Milagro. Like Arnaut's *Antigone*, listed above, there are scarce details about this play beyond those confirming their runs on stage. Notably, the existence of both of these plays is recorded by the same entities, a theater blog based out of Mexico City (Cartelera de teatro) and Zaida Godoy Navarros' 2020 article which cites a forthcoming book from Moira Fradigner.⁶³

⁵⁹ See Cartelera de Teatro CDMX blogpost at <https://carteleradeteatro.mx/2012/antigona-rapida-y-furiosa/>.

⁶⁰ Zamudio Rodríguez 2014.

⁶¹ Uribe Sánchez 2016.

⁶² See Cantarello 2020 and Llorente 2021. For general impressions about Uribe's work, see Schrool 2017.

⁶³ For the blogpost, see <https://carteleradeteatro.mx/teatro/centro/teatro-el-milagro/>

Finally, David Gaitán's *Antígona* (2015) follows some of its predecessors in adapting *Antigone* to denounce human right violations and the impunity with which they are carried out in Mexico.⁶⁴ Launched through an initiative from Mexico's National university, la Universidad Autónoma de México (UNAM), Gaitán's encounter with Sophocles begins from a theater cycle entitled 'Three Classics, Three Generations'.⁶⁵ Invited to engage with Sophocles' *Antigone*, Gaitán reimagines the ancient myth by placing its characters in a forum of public debate. Creon is invited by a Theban citizen to participate in a public discussion over Antigone's fate. This Antigone has been sentenced to death by stoning. However, by the play's end, it is Creon who is killed and buried under a pile of stones, as the people choose to turn their power against him following the public agon.

This play has received a fair amount of attention from Spanish-speaking media and scholarship but has gone largely unnoticed by Anglophone circles. First produced in 2015, the play has been repeatedly staged, featured in international tours, and appears to have garnered an especially favorable reception in Spain.⁶⁶ Whether it receives major attention from scholarship still remains to be seen.

An Overview of Classical Antiquity and the Theater in Mexico

To situate the adaptations of *Antigone* against the backdrop of Mexico's history, it is important to briefly survey Mexico's general histories of engaging with classical antiquity and establishing a European-influenced theatrical tradition. Greco-Roman antiquity has a persistent if rather complicated presence in Latin America.⁶⁷ An increasingly rich body of

⁶⁴ This play is unedited, and my attempts to contact this playwright have not been fruitful. The information listed in this survey is highly indebted to Godoy Navarro's 2020 summary and analysis.

⁶⁵ Godoy Navarro 2020.

⁶⁶ See El Universal 2016, De Ávila 2020, and Otheguy Riviera 2021.

⁶⁷ For contextualizing the reception and presence of specifically Greek Drama in the Americas, Large volumes like the Bosher, Macintosh, McConnel & Rankine edited *Oxford Handbook of Greek Drama in the*

work has attempted to investigate and chronicle the presence and use of Greco-Roman antiquity as it develops in the region, exploring its many rhetorical uses, whether to justify the acts of colonial powers or to oppose the very arguments facilitating the subjugation and eradication of indigenous populations as well as everything in between.⁶⁸ The work of scholars like Andrew Laird and his colleagues and collaborators has contributed greatly towards excavating and presenting the history of classical antiquity in Latin America for an Anglophone audience.⁶⁹ These works quickly reveal that the history of Greco-Roman antiquity in Latin America is one entangled with that of colonialism. The same can be said for the history of the theater in Mexico, as its introduction to the region greatly parallels that of Greco Roman antiquity. The introduction of both is connected to ideas of subjugation, power, religion, emancipation, and even the negotiation of national identities.⁷⁰

Cultural narratives spanning Mexico's history are typically divided across four major eras – the pre-Hispanic (pre-1519), the Colonial (1519 - 1810), the Independent, and the Post-Revolutionary (1910-present). The history of the theater and Greco Roman antiquity in the region both begin with the Spanish conquest of Mexico (1519-1521). Although this study focuses primarily on the Mexican traditions of reception and the theater in the late 20th Century, (i.e., the post-Revolutionary period), it is worth briefly sketching the beginnings of both traditions in the region. From the very early days of the New Spain, classical Greco-Roman texts see themselves represented and reproduced. In its earliest modalities, books are tools for colonization and indoctrination of indigenous populations as well as objects of

Americas and the Andújar and Nikoloutsos *Greeks and Romans on the Latin American Stage* are especially important.

⁶⁸ Aristotle's *Politics*, for example, was hotly debated in the context of conquests and the rights of indigenous populations in educated circles and school curricula.

⁶⁹ See Laird & Miller 2018 and accompanying bibliographies.

⁷⁰ See Laird's introduction in Laird & Miller 2018 for a condensed but very helpful overview of some of the uses and resonances of Greco-Roman antiquity in Latin America.

entertainment for conquistadores.⁷¹ With time, they quickly become objects of leisure and study for the growing population of European immigrants crossing the ocean to inhabit Spain's new colonies. In the New Spain, physical evidence for the presence of Greco-Roman texts exists dating back to the early 16th century with printing presses in the Americas expanding their reach quickly thereafter. Scholar Natalia Maillard Álvarez traces the influx and early circulation of Greco-Roman texts in New Spain and Peru. Her investigation covers the establishment of early printing presses and considers lists of volumes carried by passengers who entered New Spain. These lists were recorded by the Spanish Inquisition in an effort to disallow the entrance of prohibited books to the region.⁷² Since then, Greco-Roman classical texts form a part of the cultural currency of the New Spain/Mexico and are read in both Latin and Spanish.

Like classical antiquity, European theatrical practices are introduced to the region by the Spanish conquest. In her history of Mexican theater to the late 20th century, scholar Yolanda Argudín remarks on the importance of pre-Hispanic rituals and ceremonies as acts of performance which preceded the establishment of formal theater in the region. In her view, these rituals served functions similar to those the theater would come to uphold.⁷³ Argudín especially highlights Nahuatl religious ceremonies as akin to a sacred theater with religiously ordained cycles of repetition. With these traditions suppressed and dispossessed, ideas of European theater are imposed on the region via Spanish colonization. In this form, the theater in Mexico becomes a tool for subjugation and conquest. The earliest example of theater in Mexico is the Franciscan led evangelizing theater of the 16th century. With this

⁷¹ Maillard Álvarez 2018

⁷² Maillard Álvarez 2018.

⁷³ Argudín 1986 is an important volume chronicling the history of Mexican theater from its inception to the late 20th century and greatly informs this section of my survey.

theater, the Spanish acted to pacify and convert indigenous populations by projecting the need for resignation and obedience to imperial powers through their productions.⁷⁴

In the centuries following the conquest, some of the country's most emblematic and preeminent intellectual figures see themselves engaging with Greco-Roman antiquity and the theater. This is a trend which persists throughout Mexican history and well into the modern age. Under Spanish rule in the 17th Century, for example, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (an extremely influential cultural figure) engages with elements of Classical Greek mythology and Roman authors like Ovid in her writings, which encapsulate everything from verse and dramaturgy to prose and epistolary.⁷⁵ Jesuit scholars of the 16th Century use the theater to educate *criollo* populations (Spaniards born in Mexico) while those of the 18th Century reframe the history of indigenous peoples of New Spain by writing their histories through a classicizing frame.⁷⁶ In the 19th Century, Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, a pivotal figure and leader of Mexico's War of Independence, writes to challenge interpretations of Aristotle by clamoring against selective exegesis in favor of a reading of texts informed by their cultural context.

Despite the persistent presence of Greco-Roman antiquity in Mexico, there came a shift in the character of the country's dramatic productions and aesthetic priorities following Mexico's struggle for independence (1810). The theater now veered towards neoclassicism and invited international dramaturgy. The mid-19th century sees the works of Spanish playwrights, Italian operas, Shakespeare, and (to a lesser extent) original Mexican

⁷⁴ For more on this, see Aracil Varón 2008. Aracil Varón considers the possibility of resistant performances within this form of theater. However, it is evident in her work that the major driving force for this theater was the pacification and subjugation of indigenous peoples in conquered territories.

⁷⁵ See Alatorre 1995. Sor Juana has attained the status of icon in Mexican history and is often regarded as a proto feminist figure due to the subject matter of her writings, her literary prolificacy, and her resistance to restrictive church practices (Bokser 2006).

⁷⁶ For the cultural history of the theater in Mexico see Argudín 1986. For the Jesuits and their classicized histories as well as Miguel Hidalgo's challenge to Aristotle see Laird 2018.

productions all represented on stage.⁷⁷ This century is rather chaotic for the theater. Sociopolitical and economic events continuously transform the general audiences and priorities of the theater. There is war, political regimes change from conservative to liberal, and the theater's primary audiences shift from the upper classes to the common folk and back again. The end of this century then sees a return to previous sensibilities as the general interest in theatrical practice is to imitate Spanish models.⁷⁸ Both the use of classical antiquity and the general trajectory of the theater shift to negotiate issues of Mexican identity as the country enters the 20th Century.

The early 20th century in Mexico is marked by the Revolution of 1910. The ramifications of this event greatly influenced Mexican politics, culture, identity, and intellectual discourse for the time that has followed. At the center of the intellectual foundation of post-Revolutionary Mexico was a concerted engagement with classical Greco-Roman antiquity initiated by a young group of intellectuals. The so-called Ateneo de la Juventud (Atheneum of Youth) was established and active in Mexico City between 1907 and 1910. Led by two primary figures – Dominican born Pedro Henriquez Ureña and Mexican Alfonso Reyes - the group of young men collectively studied and discussed Ancient Greece and its texts and saw them become the intellectual foundation for their scholarly circle.⁷⁹ The Ateneo's importance is bolstered by the fact that its members became influential and even pivotal figures for Mexico's post-Revolutionary development. Alfonso Reyes, a dedicated Hellenist who would go on to create his own adaptations of Greek drama, was a prominent figure who shaped Mexico's intellectual history with his contributions to

⁷⁷ Argudín 1986 notes the reluctance of businessmen to fund Mexican dramaturgy in Mexico's preeminent theaters. Her assertion speaks to Mexico's tendency to look to external influence for markers of progress and cultural development. On this, see Goldberg 2009. For examples of this phenomenon, see Vilasana and Gómez 2017.

⁷⁸ Argudín 1986.

philosophical thought and aesthetics.⁸⁰ Reyes would form a part of some of the earliest adaptations of Greek tragedy in Mexico.⁸¹ José Vasconcelos, became the first secretary of public education in Mexican history (1921-1924). He engaged deeply with ancient Greek philosophical thought and wrote a seminal treatise on Latin American mestizo (mixed race) racial identity in 1925.⁸² Along with other prominent scholars and political figures, these men shaped much of Mexico's trajectory after the Revolution. Their foundation in Greco-Roman classical antiquity revitalizes and centers the pervasiveness of Greece and Rome in the cultural production and intellectual tradition of Mexico throughout the 20th Century.

Following the cultural shifts of revolution, the theater in Mexico greatly diversifies relative to previous centuries. There are marked movements of popular and independent theater, which differ vastly from the major productions of national theaters.⁸³ So-called 'Western canonical' plays hold a space in Mexico, but so do things like public poetry readings, and avant-garde theater.⁸⁴ Regionality in Mexico is represented more strongly in

⁷⁹ For more on the *Ateneistas*, and in particular Enriquez Ureña's contributions to the group and Latin American engagements with Greco-Roman antiquities, see Andújar's pieces from 2018. Laird 2018 also briefly discusses the *Ateneistas* and their importance for Mexico in his introduction.

⁸⁰ For a discussion of 20th century adaptations of Greek drama in Mexico, Alfonso Reyes, and some of his impact and adaptations, see Barrenechea 2015.

⁸¹ There exists evidence for numerous adaptations of Greek Tragedy including the *Iphigenia in Tauris* in Alfonso Reyes' *Ifigenia Cruel* (1955), José Solés *Troyanas* (1963) (*Trojan Women*), Ignacio Retes' *Edipo Rey* (1961) (*Oedipus Tyrannus*), and Luisa Josefina Hernández *Hecuba* (1976). According to Francisco Barrenechea, these adaptations had largely apolitical aesthetic and artistic pursuits. It appears that many of these plays dealt with issues of national identity but were less politically charged than something like De la Rosa's *Antigone* (Ch. 3). Even Hernández's *Hecuba*, a pointed critique of Mexican culture's gender politics, critiques a societal ill without necessarily attacking discernable institutions or structures. For more, see Barrenechea 2015.

⁸² Vasconcelos' *La Raza Cósmica* is an influential, albeit problematic, discussion of Mestizo racial identity which argues for the superiority of a mixed race, as brought forth in the union of European and Indigenous American blood, due to its retention of the best qualities of each of its racial components. See Vasconcelos 1997. *La Raza Cósmica* displays ideas first presented in Vasconcelos' *Prometeo Vencedor* (Triumphant Prometheus), a take on Greek Tragedy which championed Latin American mixed racial identity in a similar manner (Laird 2018). For the problems inherited from Vasconcelos position, see Goldberg 2009.

⁸³ On the 'teatro popular', or theater of the people preceding the 1990s, see Frischmann 1990. Frischmann's analysis of popular theater is a good historical document of the theater's trajectory in Mexico. However, it does not anticipate the rapid decline in theatrical spaces and audiences which would occur with the dawn of the new millennium.

⁸⁴ For a general chronology of Mexican theater, see Olguín 2017.

its artistic productions.⁸⁵ University theater emerges and becomes incredibly important for the theater's development.⁸⁶ For much of the century, the theater experiences a boom of artistry and public interest. However, this comes crashing down at the end of the century and continues through the beginning of the 21st.⁸⁷ Audiences and theatrical spaces are markedly reduced with the passage of time, as is access due to economic, educational, and geographic constraints.⁸⁸ It is predominantly in this landscape that the *Antigones* of Mexico are produced.

Structure of this Study

The next three chapters will each be devoted to one of the three selected adaptations of *Antigone*. I will offer my reading of these plays in chronological order starting with that of Fuentes Mares. As mentioned previously, I have chosen these plays due to the fact that they are temporally spaced and thus provide a fuller picture of Antigone's trajectory in the country. Additionally, I propose that these plays are representative of specific changes in the character of Mexico's engagement with *Antigone* as a factor of shifting sociopolitical issues. All three plays speak powerfully to the relation between sociohistorical context and cultural production. From being marked by historical moments to criticizing historical narratives and even denouncing highly specific regimes and institutions, these *Antigones* offer a functional picture of *Antigone* in Mexico. In highlighting their unique accomplishments and the diversity of their engagements and anxieties, I aim to simultaneously trace and problematize the development of an *Antigone* tradition in Mexico. By the end of the study, I pose the

⁸⁵ See Fernando de Ita 2017.

⁸⁶ Many of the playwrights who would go on to establish their own theatrical circles use the national university, the UNAM, and its cultural connections as launching pads for their careers as playwrights and directors. See Aguilar Zinser 2017.

⁸⁷ See Frischmann 1992 and Nares Feria 2012 which describe the challenges and developments of Mexican theater as well as the diminishment in theater audiences and interest respectively.

⁸⁸ Costantino 1995.

question of whether these plays can truly be representative of a national context, and in asking the question I extrapolate the implications of our answer for our broader operational categories. Beyond tracing *Antigone*'s path, I will remark on each play's distinctively Mexican components and model what stands to be gained by their inclusion into the larger tradition of studying the reception of Sophocles' *Antigone*.

In Chapter II, I analyze Fuentes Mares' *La Joven Antígona se va a la Guerra* (1968), or *Young Antigone Goes to War*. As it was first performed following the terrible Massacre of Tlatelolco of October 2nd, 1968, I set my reading of this text against the backdrop of this historical event while interrogating the play's discussions of revolution, ethics, and the human cost of enacting social change. I propose that the play argues from a humanist perspective and expresses a skepticism of revolution born from an acute awareness of loss and suffering. By examining the play's language of class and gender, I maintain that the play fears the recursive and cyclical nature of power structures which do not hold their subjects in high regard and deny their inherent value. I note the play's marked invitations to be read with and against Sophocles' original as a method for interrogating our approach to ideological oppositions. I conclude that this distinctly Mexican reimagining of *Antigone* compels us to look beyond divisive dualities to recognize the basic humanity of our opponents.

In Chapter III, I examine Olga Harmony's *La Ley de Creón* and argue for its exceptionality as a play that denounces failing systems, traces a transnational and transhistorical record of oppression, and critiques collective failings to uphold human dignity through its examination of class, gender, and ethnic divisions. This play draws from the history of the Mexican Revolution just as powerfully as it does from Sophocles' *Antigone*. Consequently, this chapter is heavily informed by scholarship of the revolution

and uses it as an additional lens to interpret Harmony's adaptation. I likewise maintain that Harmony capitalizes on *Antigone* and its history to intensify her play's representations of social stratifications by knowingly invoking elements of the ancient play through her use of language and characterization. In my reading of this play and its troubled conclusion, I explore the play's sense of hopelessness as represented through its teleological narrative and its repeated and failed efforts to manifest collaboration, sorority, and collective action.

Chapter IV analyzes Perla de la Rosa's *Antígona: las voces que incendian el desierto*. Here, I offer a reading of de la Rosa's play that is especially attuned to its local resonance. Therein I attempt to showcase the benefits of adopting a highly localized approach to reception whenever possible. Through de la Rosa's adaptation, I identify a shift in the use of *Antigone* in Mexico as it turns away from more abstract representations of suffering and oppression and steps into the territory of pointed and unambiguous social critique. The chapter explores the parallels between de la Rosa's Ciudad Tebas and Ciudad Juárez at the beginning of the 21st century. The ensuing analysis is informed by the history of the city, its socioeconomic context, and the play's rich engagement with Sophoclean works beyond *Antigone*. I remark on the play's use of Brechtian techniques, in particular an emulation of Brecht's use of the prologue in his *Antigone*, as effective tools for grounding the brutality of the play into a feasible and resonant social reality. De la Rosa's play is simultaneously a testament to resilience and a reminder of our collective failures to resist oppressive and exploitative systems at the cost of our very livelihood.

The conclusion of this analysis reflects on the three plays and the trajectory they represent. Here, I offer a form of synthesis. I interrogate major trends and remark on the difficulty of making definitive statements about a tradition, even one as small as condensed as this. Informed by the larger corpus of *Antigones* in Mexico, this final chapter attempts to

characterize the progression of *Antigone* in this national context as compared to pivotal moments in the country's history. In so doing, I argue that these plays challenge scholarly assumptions about the global history of *Antigone* as well as anticipate arguments and readings later made by powerful scholars in the fields of Classics and classical receptions. I use these plays and their accompanying corpus to argue in favor of specific and culturally informed approaches to reception. I likewise aim to support the inclusion of these plays and their surrounding scholarship into the broader discourse of reception, imagining a future for scholarship unrestricted by regional and linguistic barriers.

II. Humanity and Revolution in José Fuentes Mares' *La joven Antígona se va a la guerra*

La joven Antígona se va a la guerra ('Young Antigone Goes to War') is a Mexican adaptation of Sophocles' *Antigone* written and first performed in 1968.⁸⁹ The play was written by Mexican author José Fuentes Mares (1918-1986), a historiographer of 19th century Mexico who was also an essayist, short story writer, and playwright.⁹⁰ His works are characterized by an interest in politics, government, and Mexican identity.⁹¹ As we shall see, these factors are all present in his adaptation of *Antigone*.⁹² Like its ancient model, Fuentes Mares' play raises questions about extremism, the ethics of resistance, and the human cost of revolution. The play, full of unique accomplishments, demonstrates a deep engagement with the Sophoclean original and has a complex original performance context. It premiered a week after the Tlatelolco Massacre of October 2, 1968.⁹³ Tlatelolco, the deadliest student massacre in Mexican history, marked a brutal end to months of organized student protests at the hands of the state. As the historical context to the first production of this play, it prefigures many of the themes explored therein and shades the play's reception.

⁸⁹ Text in Fuentes Mares 1969. My translation of this play is included in the appendix to this dissertation. All translations from Spanish and Greek (Griffith ed., 1999), as well as any errors, are my own. Anglophone and Latin American scholarship have largely overlooked Fuentes Mares' adaptation. I was first alerted to its existence via Mee & Foley 2011, where a brief summary of its plot, written by Moira Fradinger, is relegated to an appendix. In Latin American scholarship, this work is summarized and briefly discussed. See Bosch 1999, Pianacci 2015, and Fradinger 2018. For an English summary, see also Weiner 2015. A version of this chapter is published in OUP's *Classical Receptions Journal*, and this chapter is written with full permissions from the journal. For full bibliographical note, see Carrete 2021.

⁹⁰ *El País* 1986. Mexico's national council for arts and culture reports Fuentes Mares' death as occurring in 2014. This seems to be erroneous. Most publications agree that Fuentes Mares died on April 8th, 1986.

⁹¹ Fuentes Mares bibliography is extensive. Major works include *Juárez: los Estados Unidos Y Europa* (1962), *La Revolución Mexicana* (1971), *Servidumbre* (1983), and *Las mil y una noches mexicanas* (1982). For a full bibliography see Muro 1986 and Ordóñez Burgos 2014. For an analysis of major themes see Ordóñez Burgos 2011.

⁹² The Mexicanity of the adaptation is also apparent in its language and its use of colloquialisms.

⁹³ Fuentes Mares' adaptation premiered on October 10, 1968 in the auditorium of the Universidad Autónoma de Chihuahua (UACH) to a university and public audience. The play was acted by the Universidad de Chihuahua Theatre Group and directed by Fernando Saavedra.

In this chapter, I bring attention to Fuentes Mares' work as an exceptional contribution to the Latin American reception of Sophocles' *Antigone*. I will detail the play's explicit invitations to be read against Sophocles' original and highlight the playwright's choices to reframe Antigone's resistance by reworking the long-standing dualisms found in its ancient model. I argue that Fuentes Mares has created an adaptation of *Antigone* that is skeptical of revolution and advises introspection, compassion, and endurance in the face of violence and oppression. In this, it differs from other Latin American adaptations of *Antigone*, which tend to give a voice to the marginalized with calls for organized social action or pleas for the acknowledgment of ongoing abuses. Fuentes Mares instead gives us a heroine whose desire for change is grounded in caution - a caution born from an acute awareness of loss and the seemingly unavoidable replication of the abuses of power. It is my hope that this analysis will expand our understanding of the reception of Sophocles' *Antigone* in Latin America as multifaceted and varied.

In what follows, I provide a plot summary of Fuentes Mares' adaptation before turning our attention to its unique qualities. This discussion will go some way towards situating Fuentes Mares' adaptation in the broader context of the Latin American *Antigone* tradition. In the rest of the chapter, I analyze Fuentes Mares' play through the lenses of class and power dynamics. I explore Fuentes Mares' selection and usage of Sophoclean themes and excerpts along with the play's historical context. Finally, I examine the play's prescriptions and its distinctly Mexican cultural components.

Fuentes Mares' play in two acts reimagines the character Antigone as the newest member of a fringe political organization seeking to overthrow the government by destabilizing its institutions. This reimagined Antigone is the protagonist of Fuentes Mares' adaptation. However, her real name is never revealed. Instead, we learn that this

organization has given her the pseudonym of Antígona. Though she will be the central figure for this narrative, she does not appear until part way through the first act.

Act I of this adaptation allows us to peer into what seems to be a typical evening in the organization's headquarters, a dimly lit basement in an unspecified Mexican city.⁹⁴ We first meet Pedro and Juan, two rank and file members, who are killing time while playing dominos. Their dialogue provides some exposition about the structure and proceedings of their organization. We learn that they think of themselves as revolutionaries and refer to their organization as a *partido*, the word used for political parties in Mexico. They receive commands from some unseen centralized entity. Juan and Pedro abstractly converse about revolution, and then turn their attention to Antígona's recruitment. Though neither man has met her, Pedro speaks of Antígona as a religious convert who will adhere to the tenets of their revolution like a zealot. Juan is not as enthused with her recruitment and expresses his opposition to her involvement. Their conversation intensifies as they debate the proper background for a revolutionary. It is at this point that Antígona enters their headquarters. Juan is quick to begin questioning her motives and background, and we get a glimpse of Antígona's stance on the topics they had been discussing. Her response is our first indication that Antígona has joined this organization with a fundamentally different idea of what revolution entails and what its end goal should be. Antonio then enters the basement. He is the leader of this revolutionary cell and the person responsible for recruiting Antígona. Upon entering, he reveals the details of their newest assignment from the *partido*. In assigning this mission, he tasks Antígona with setting a bomb on a train full of elites and government officials. Antígona is obviously shaken by this command. Nevertheless, she departs resolutely after saying that she will carry out her orders.

⁹⁴ The varied mentions of police presence, the existence of political events held by an elite class, and the existence of a highly-frequented train station all suggest a well-populated city as our broader setting.

It is important to emphasize that the tenets of this organization are never explained or laid out in detail. We can surmise from the dialogue that most of the members of this organization come from marginalized communities or low socio-economic backgrounds. Early on, Juan speaks of experiencing hunger. He marks this as a necessary experience for a revolutionary. As a group, the organization members condemn luxury and general socio-economic oppressions throughout the play. And yet, little is said about the world beyond their revolution. The closest we get to a mission statement is found in these words spoken by Antonio:

Por lo pronto nos interesa la revolución, no la moral, y para llegar a ella todos los caminos son buenos (Fuentes Mares 1969: 98-99).

For the moment, we are interested in revolution, not morality, and to get to revolution all paths are good.

In addition to this statement, we have a brief moment in which Juan refers to the *partido* as the ultimate good. He states,

Y ahora seré yo quien recuerde, con Sócrates, que el Partido no es bueno por la revolución si no al revés: que la revolución es buena por el Partido. ¡Sin el Partido la revolución no valdría tres cominos! (Fuentes Mares 1969: 67).

And now I will be the one remembering, via Socrates, that the Party is not good by virtue of revolution, but on the contrary, revolution is good by virtue of the Party. Without the Party, revolution would not be worth three cumin seeds!

This strange turn to a Socratic ideal gives us the clearest indication of the revolutionaries' ideological position.⁹⁵ For them, the *partido* is the greatest good, and whatever it dictates must be obeyed without question. We will learn that it endeavors to violently destroy the status quo, but there is no discernable description of what will ensue thereafter. The stern

⁹⁵ Fuentes Mares 1969: 63. Pedro paraphrases the argument in Plato's *Euthyphro* that states that the gods cannot help but love the Good because it is good. He then offers a contrast by claiming that for the revolutionaries, the Good is revolution and the *Partido* has replaced the gods.

commitment to the *partido* paired with a myopic vision for the future gives birth to the ideological conflict of this play.

Act II begins with a choral passage adapted from Sophocles' *Antigone*, which introduces on stage the character Antigone from Sophocles' play (more on this below). Once the chorus is finished and Sophocles' *Antigone* leaves the stage, the action takes us into the organization's basement as Juan and Pedro, later joined by Antonio and Adán (another member of the organization), discuss Antígona's failure to set the train bomb.⁹⁶ We hear from Adán's eyewitness report that she initially went through with her orders, but turned back and retrieved the bomb before it was detonated.⁹⁷ As the members speculate on the reasoning behind her failure, a defiant Antígona returns to confront an enraged Antonio and his followers.⁹⁸ The seeds of ideological disparity sown in the first act of the play bear tempestuous fruit in this second act. Both parties steadfastly adhere to their ideas of revolution, agency, and humanity. The *partido* maintains that casualties are inevitable in a revolution, and they are worth accruing for the sake of dismantling the status quo. Antígona argues that no revolution can succeed if it does not honor the inherent value of human life. With neither side faltering in their ideology, Antígona is dismissed and forced to leave. She has disobeyed her orders and defied the *partido*. To ensure her silence, Antonio and the organization force Antígona to sign a fake confession in which she claims responsibility for a failed terrorist act. The play ends as a defiant Antígona is shut out of the organization's

⁹⁶ Adán acts as a sort of chaperone for Antígona. He was her guide to the basement when she first enters in Act I.

⁹⁷ Like the messenger reports in Sophocles' original, Antígona's actions happen off-stage and are described by eyewitness account.

⁹⁸ It is not clear that Antonio is a motivated name. Though not etymologically related, the 'Ant' in Antonio parallels the 'Ant' in Antígona. Both characters seem to share characteristics, interests, and intellectual pursuits, even if their answers to the questions of revolution differ. The similarities between the name may be hinting at their relationship and upbringing, things that are not explicitly stated in the text. Antonio is a very common name in Mexican culture, so the name parallel could be coincidental.

basement while the remaining members mock her words and begin a new game of dominos, thus ending the play as it began.

The edited volume containing Fuentes Mares' adaptation includes a foreword in which he provides his thoughts on this play.⁹⁹ When discussing his *Antigone*, Fuentes Mares strongly suggests that he had a specific message in mind and established expectations about his play's reception. He expresses dissatisfaction at the reception of his play, and at the public's critique that his *Antigone*'s message [*mensaje*] is 'unclear' or 'insufficient'.¹⁰⁰ As I will show in my analysis, Fuentes Mares seems to champion the idea that a true revolution cannot come about until humanity overcomes its self-imposed stratifications and oppressions.¹⁰¹ This skepticism about revolution helps situate Fuentes Mares in the broader *Antigone* tradition.

The tradition of adapting *Antigone* in Latin America is rich, varied, and extraordinarily complex. In the most comprehensive survey of Latin American *Antigones*, Romulo Pianacci observes that *Antigone* adaptations are as varied as the circumstances and personalities of their playwrights.¹⁰² However, those who endeavor to characterize the tradition tend to agree on a few commonalities. In discussing these commonalities, I hope to bring attention to Fuentes Mares' exceptionality. This survey is not meant to be exhaustive. I

⁹⁹ Fuentes Mares 1969: xi. This volume includes *La joven Antígona se va a la guerra*, *La emperatriz*, *Su alteza serenísima*, and *La amada Patidifusa*. In discussing his *Antigone*, Fuentes Mares states that detractors of his play's message were looking to turn the theatre into a classroom, and he refused to allow this. Considering that the play was staged in a university, his statement is especially striking.

¹⁰⁰ However, the published version of his play appears as it did when first performed, without modifications. I have yet to discover any additional materials (reviews, newspaper articles, etc.) that deal with the play's immediate reception. We are left to speculate about the play's initial audience and their reactions.

¹⁰¹ Pianacci and Bosch remark on a single passage from Fuentes Mares. I here offer my translation of the passage as spoken by Antígona: 'I do not now when it will be, but the day when man overcomes his own misery, on that very day the greatest of all revolutions will be completed. And that day will come!' (Fuentes Mares 1969: 99). Both scholars agree that this is the message Fuentes Mares wished to transmit, but as I hope to demonstrate, this play is more complex and richer in meaning.

¹⁰² Pianacci 2015: 315.

merely wish to situate our author against the backdrop of the Latin American tradition and to offer a brief meditation on this category.

The Latin American *Antigone* tradition is heavily influenced by the *Antigones* of Jean Anouilh and Bertolt Brecht.¹⁰³ *Antigones* in Latin America are often, and I would say accurately, characterized as socio-political plays tackling distinct forms of oppression. Latin American *Antigones* tend to cast the marginalized in the role of Polynices, and Antigone in the role of the heroine.¹⁰⁴ As is the case with any sweeping model, however, there are exceptions to these observations.¹⁰⁵

María del Carmen Bosch notes that until 1968, there is greater variance in the politics and aesthetics of adaptations of *Antigone* in Latin America than after 1968.¹⁰⁶ Bosch does not give a reason for this change, but her observation supports Edith Hall's argument which marks 1968 as a turning point towards progressively positioned adaptations of Greek tragedy.¹⁰⁷ For Hall, the monumental global changes of 1968 (the American Civil Rights Movement, student movements in France and Mexico, etc.) lead to a shift in consciousness in which a younger generation breaks with the politics of its predecessor. This shift is reflected in productions of Greek drama a year later. Hall argues that the ensuing productions of Greek drama tend to be progressive in their politics, though she makes room for exceptions.¹⁰⁸ Bosch and Hall's arguments are useful for situating Fuentes Mares'

¹⁰³ Our 'Latin American tradition' label is already problematized. The tradition does not exist in a vacuum and is heavily indebted to these two European playwrights.

¹⁰⁴ Pianacci 2015.

¹⁰⁵ For the Latin American adaptations listed in the notes, the initial date of staging is given in parentheses. Staged in Argentina, Leopoldo Marechal's *Antígona Velez* (1952) is the first Latin American *Antigone*. Pianacci reads this play as a pro-Perón adaptation with social politics that run contrary to most other Latin American *Antigones*. In 1968, Franklin Dominguez breaks with the tragic conventions of *Antigone* and stages his *Antígona-humor* in the Dominican Republic as a comedy with a happy ending.

¹⁰⁶ Bosch 1999. Bosch offers a survey of 'Ibero-American' *Antigones* in the second half of the 20th century.

¹⁰⁷ Hall, Macintosh, and Wrigley 2005. See also Rabinowitz 2008.

¹⁰⁸ A few works precede Fuentes Mares' version in Latin America: de Zavalía's *El Limite* (1958) is distinctly anti-Perón. Using Thebes to discuss Nicaragua, Steiner's *Antígona en el infierno* (1958) denounces an oppressive regime and its brutal tactics. Helfgott's *Antígona* (1964) reflects the political reality of Peru with meditations on colonialism and economic and class disparities. Rengifo's *La fiesta de los moribundos* (1966)

adaptation. *La Joven Antígona* is staged in the middle of this shift in consciousness, and acts as an exception to some of the generalities attributed to the Latin American tradition.¹⁰⁹

La joven Antígona se va a la guerra is the first Mexican adaptation of *Antigone*, or at the very least, the first to be published in any sort of edition. As such, it is significant and foundational.¹¹⁰ It is difficult to ascertain whether it is influenced by other Latin American adaptations.¹¹¹ Discerning its legacy and influence is equally complicated, even if we limit our scope to Mexico alone.¹¹² The diversity of Latin American adaptations makes establishing causal links precarious interpretative territory. Fuentes Mares' himself only flags Anouilh and Brecht as literary influences, and so I will limit my discussion to their presence in Fuentes Mares' adaptation. Like Anouilh, Fuentes Mares also makes use of extra-dramatic prologues and ends in a similar fashion – with men playing dominoes. In his foreword, Fuentes Mares mentions Brecht specifically as he offers a meditation on theatre and its cultural importance.¹¹³ When read against Brecht, we will see that Fuentes Mares also makes use of parallel narratives to some degree. Both Brecht and Fuentes Mares use their prologues to stage parallel action with thematic bearing on the ensuing drama. In contrast to Brecht, however, Fuentes Mares inverts the temporality of his extra-dramatic

sees Antigone fighting a multinational corporation as she seeks burial for Ismene instead of Polynices. These *Antigones* can all be considered revolutionary in their character and progressive in their politics, thus complicating Boch and Hall's models.

¹⁰⁹ A reminder: though first staged in 1968, *La joven Antígona* was published as part of a collection in 1969.

¹¹⁰ In making this claim, I exclude Spanish philosopher María Zambrano's philosophical writing *La Tumba de Antígona* (1967). Written in France and published in Mexico and Spain in 1967, Zambrano's interpretation of the Antigone myth is read as a reflection on the human condition in the aftermath of the world wars and 20th century dictatorships from a primarily European perspective. See Bush 2004 and Moreton 2010. I do not believe labeling Zambrano's *Antigone* as Mexican would be accurate. Nevertheless, her adaptation demonstrates the limits of our categories.

¹¹¹ For Latin American adaptations that precede Fuentes Mares, see notes 107 and 110.

¹¹² Following Fuentes Mares, evidence exists for eleven major Mexican *Antigone* adaptations. Details about these plays are included in the introduction to this dissertation under subsection 'Tracing a Tradition'. It is difficult to ascertain what (if any) impact Fuentes Mares had on his successors. The fact that the political climate of post-2000 Mexico is drastically different from that of the 1960s further complicates this matter. Fuentes Mares' most likely successor, Perla de la Rosa, shares a region and intertexts with Fuentes Mares (Anouilh and Brecht), but no evidence points to direct contact with his work.

prologues. Whereas Brecht resituates the ancient material by providing a sobering contemporary context via his prologue, Fuentes Mares invokes the ancient model in his prologues in order to set the interpretative context for his adaptation. Fuentes Mares' prologue takes us back to Sophocles' *Antigone*, thereby marking the ancient text as its privileged predecessor.

Fuentes Mares' engagement with Sophocles' *Antigone* is striking and paraded throughout his adaptation. We will see that he quotes Sophocles directly in a manner that invites us to read his work with and against Sophocles' original.¹¹⁴ Fuentes Mares has privileged certain themes and dynamics from Sophocles' *Antigone* at the expense of others. If we look for direct parallels with Sophocles' *Antigone*, we will find that there is no character who corresponds to Ismene. Furthermore, Antígona does not mourn the death of a loved one.¹¹⁵ Consequently, ideas of kinship, burial rites, and a desire to reunite with the dead do not feature prominently in this adaptation.¹¹⁶ The gender dynamics and religious diction of Sophocles' original are preserved and foregrounded, but they are further complicated by notions of class. Though the Antigone characters in Fuentes Mares and Sophocles both rebel, the rebellion in Sophocles consists of a very pointed action. In contrast, rebellion in Fuentes Mares consists of an equally powerful inaction, namely her refusal to detonate the train bomb. In addition to these differences, the most marked

¹¹³ Fuentes Mares' foreword and his use of the prologue suggest that he also wished to be read with and against Brecht.

¹¹⁴ Fuentes Mares is most likely using as basis for this adaptation the widely available Spanish-language translation of *Antigone* by José Alemany Bolufer (Sophocles 1921). To the best of my knowledge, Fuentes Mares did not read Greek. The language in both works is nearly identical. In his own foreword, Fuentes Mares addresses that the Sophoclean excerpts in his adaptation are taken from Sophocles' text (meaning Bolufer's translation). Fuentes Mares has slightly modified the text in his adaptation. For related Mexican scholarship from the era, see Granero 1965.

¹¹⁵ Though Latin American adaptations of *Antigone* often cast the marginalized in Polynices' stead thus resituating the object of mourning, we get no comparable substitution in Fuentes Mares' work. See Pianacci 2015: 315.

¹¹⁶ See Söderbäck 2012, especially the introduction. Fanny Söderbäck observes that adaptations of *Antigone* have three elemental components: the narrative revolves around kinship burial rites, Antigone is always a

departure from the Sophoclean model is the object of the Antigone character's resistance.¹¹⁷ Though Antígona hopes to rebel against the state when joining the revolutionaries, her rebellion is ultimately one against the very anti-state group she has joined. This unique choice allows Fuentes Mares to explore political resistance from a perspective that we do not find in other Latin American adaptations.¹¹⁸

Fuentes Mares' exceptionalities highlight the limitations of our broader models. To speak of the *Antigone* tradition in Latin American risks drawing too broad a stroke. Nevertheless, thinking in terms of a larger geographical context allows us further to appreciate the particularities of each adaptation. In what follows, I provide an in-depth analysis of Fuentes Mares' play by first turning our attention to its central conflict. I then advance a reading of the text which asks us to observe the seemingly inevitable cycles of abuse and Antígona's humanist resistance to that violence and political oppression.¹¹⁹

The central conflict of this adaptation revolves around notions of human value. Within the play's revolutionary context, we see two parties striving to change the status quo. However, the parties are split. Where one party pursues revolution to destroy and usurp longstanding power structures, the other hopes revolution will end human misery and suffering. For one party, humanity has an intrinsic value. For the other, revolution is born of

woman, and she always fights against state power in some way. Given this model, the absence of burial rites is especially noteworthy.

¹¹⁷ This adaptation is indebted to readings of the *Antigone* which see a dualism between the state and the individual or the divine. For alternative readings discussing the *Antigone's* ethical considerations, see Cabrera Sánchez 2016 and Berge 2017.

¹¹⁸ González Betancur (2010) provides a brief, but helpful, overview of the political significance of Antigone's character in Latin American theater. For a brief analysis of Greek theatre and representations of violence from a broad Latin American perspective, see Flores Farfán 2014.

¹¹⁹ With these cycles of abuse I am referring to the stratification promoted and enforced by those in power. Discrimination, explored by Fuentes Mares in terms of class and gender, promises to create stratification and oppression so long as those who hold power maintain discriminatory views. This holds true for both the state and the revolutionaries.

necessary sacrifices, casualties, and self-objectification.¹²⁰ These positions are necessarily polarized given that the latter intends to kill people to accomplish its goals.

Fuentes Mares establishes the adaptation's conflict through the reimagined roles of Antigone and Creon. Like Sophocles' character Antigone, Fuentes Mares' Antígona takes a stand against a political entity. The role of Creon is relegated to the revolutionaries, but is most potently embodied by Antonio and Juan. Splitting Creon into two characters is unique to this adaptation in Latin America, and to my knowledge unique to the *Antigone* corpus.¹²¹ As leader, Antonio closely resembles Creon's authoritarian characteristics. As a lower ranking revolutionary, Juan is a vocal embodiment of Creon's more combative attributes. He is especially insistent on the notion that being a revolutionary demands blind obedience. Antígona regards this demand as reductive. In Act I, when Antígona and the revolutionaries first debate man's role in revolution, Antígona states the following:

¡El hombre no ha de ser instrumento del hombre!¹²² En el mundo de dónde vengo son las cosas de ese modo, y por eso estoy aquí. ¡Pero no estoy dispuesta a salir de ese mundo para caer donde mismo! (Fuentes Mares 1969: 72).

Man should not be man's instrument! That is the way things are in my world, and that is the reason I am here now. But I am in no way willing to leave that world only to fall into the same pit!

Antígona's words, along with the surrounding discussion, reveal the ideological break in the narrative. The revolutionaries see themselves as dehumanized instruments of the *partido* and

¹²⁰ With 'self-objectification' I refer to the revolutionaries' tendency to devalue themselves in favor of their organization's interests.

¹²¹ As an embodiment of the state or oppressive system of power, Creon takes many forms in Latin America. Though there tends to be a singular referent to Creon (identified by his name, speech, or edicts in relation to the Sophoclean original), one could argue that Creon is split in any adaptation in which Antigone confronts a systemic force, thereby complicating this claim. Creon can be represented in a person or in a system. Perla de la Rosa's *Antigone* (2004), for example, stages a direct Creon referent while also combatting a systemic form of oppression. Fuentes Mares' exceptionality in dividing Creon is born from the absence of a single direct referent.

¹²² Throughout this play, we will see Antígona and her opponents use the word *hombre*. Though this word literally translates to man, it is used in this play as a referent to humankind. I would discourage too literal a gendered reading of this word. Though Mexico is gradually shifting towards more inclusive language, this use of *hombre* is still employed and understood today. A more gender neutral word like *humano* may have read as

conduits of revolution against the oppressive state. Antígona believes in the inherent value of humanity and thinks revolution should abide by this value. Though dismissed by the revolutionaries, these words serve to establish the core of Antígona’s ethical stance. The passage also marks Antígona as an outsider infiltrating a world that is not her own. She hopes for a different order, but her ideas seem foreign even among the revolutionaries. This ideological clash will prove persistent throughout the play. Questions of humanity and an individual’s worth and potential are pervasive and interwoven through the adaptation’s direct use of Sophoclean passages.

Act I uses a Sophoclean excerpt to provide a dramatic and ethical framing and to evoke sympathy for Antígona. The adaptation opens with a choral ode that draws closely from but condenses Sophocles’ original. Instead of the chorus, a Greek warrior from ‘the days of the Peloponnesian War’ appears before the curtain and addresses the audience from a physically and temporally removed space. He states:

<p>De cuantas maravillas Pueblan el mundo, la mayor el hombre. [...] a cuanto cabe imaginar rebasa su fértil inventiva, que inspira el bien, o que en el mal fracasa. ¡De cuantas maravillas pueblan el mundo, la mayor el hombre!¹²³</p>	<p>Of the many marvels which populate the earth, the greatest is man. [...] whatever one imagines within reason, his fertile inventiveness surpasses, that which inspires good, or fails when in evil Of the many marvels which populate the earth, the greatest is man!</p>
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These lines paraphrase Sophocles’ *Antigone* 332-375, verses commonly known as the ‘Ode to Man’. The language in Fuentes Mares’ ode is optimistic about man’s potential.¹²⁴ Fuentes Mares works from a translation which speaks of humanity with a sense of reverence.¹²⁵ The

slightly awkward, especially in the 1960s when the masculine was understood as a general plural for abstractions of this sort.

¹²³ Fuentes Mares 1969: 59.

¹²⁴ For more on the Sophoclean ode and its importance and literary legacy, see Crane 1989 and Staley 1985.

¹²⁵ See note 113.

ambiguity present in the Greek δεινά, namely its simultaneous signification of terrible or wondrous, is absent from *maravillas*.¹²⁶ *Maravillas* is overwhelmingly a positive word, most accurately translated to ‘marvels’ or ‘wonders’ in Spanish usage. In addition, man’s potential for evil is downplayed. This is most evident if we contrast Fuentes Mares’ phrasing with that in the original Greek.

σοφόν τι τὸ μηχανόεν
τέχνας ὑπὲρ ἐλπίδ’ ἔχων
τοτὲ μὲν κακόν, ἄλλοτ’ ἐπ’ ἐσθλὸν ἔρπει (Soph. *Ant.* 365-367).

Possessing an inventiveness in his craft which is skillful beyond hope, he advances sometimes to wickedness, other times to good.

Whereas Sophocles presents wickedness (κακόν) as one of two equally possible paths for humans (as implied by τοτὲ... ἄλλοτ’), Fuentes Mares characterizes humanity’s evils as mistakes which result from failed inventiveness. The fall into evil is thus not simply one of two equally probable outcomes built into the human condition. It is instead a state of failure found at the limits of human inventiveness. Furthermore, the word order of evil and good is inverted as we move from Sophocles to Fuentes Mares. An equivalent for the Sophoclean lines which are more clearly pessimistic regarding the human condition (Soph. *Ant.* 361-364 describing man’s inability to escape death and 368-375 discussing the fate of those who do not abide by the laws) is also entirely omitted. To emphasize its optimism further, the adaptation repeats its praise of man as it closes the choral ode with an exclamation.

Framing Act I through this adapted Sophoclean ode privileges questions about potentiality and the value of human life. The audience is reminded of humanity’s potential to achieve its marvelous ideal. Consequently, the revolutionaries’ failure to honor this potential implicates them in humanity’s fall into evil. This in turn marks their plan as unethical. The drama of the remainder of this first act does not bear an obvious resemblance to Sophocles’

¹²⁶ Soph. *Ant.* 332.

original, but it lays the ideological foundations for the Sophoclean themes of resistance and stratification present in the second act of the play.

Act II is devoted to Antígona's resistance. It opens with selected excerpts from Sophocles' *Antigone*, which I discuss below.¹²⁷ As in the first act, the same Greek warrior who opens the play provides a summary of the struggle between Antigone and Creon. Here, he allows for passages from Sophocles' original to be interwoven into the summary narration. In a pointed moment of meta-theatricality, Sophocles' Antigone comes on stage. She is neither introduced nor directly acknowledged by the characters in the play. She simply appears amid the Greek warrior's narration and vocalizes her excerpts (Soph. *Ant.* 450-460, and 914-924) removed in space and time from the events surrounding Antígona. The casting notes for this play suggest that Sophocles' Antigone and Antígona were played by the same actress.¹²⁸ This decision, unique in Latin American adaptations, invites us to take a step back from the ongoing drama and to think about this production in terms of a history of *Antigones*.¹²⁹ It stands as the play's most potent plea to be read alongside Sophocles' original. Furthermore, this choice further associates the two characters and implicates their struggles. Fuentes Mares stages a continuity of character and thus suggests that an element of both Antigone characters is fundamentally the same while inviting us to appreciate their differences. This is especially important, given that their struggles will come to a head in what follows.

Antígona's resemblance to Sophocles' Antigone is strongest as she confronts Antonio and Juan, Fuentes Mares' Creon referents. Their discussion initially revolves around Antígona's choice to disobey a direct command. Their exchange inevitably becomes

¹²⁷ In order of appearance, Fuentes Mares incorporates excerpts corresponding to Soph. *Ant.* 26-30, 446-449, 450-460, and 914-924.

¹²⁸ Lack of evidence withholds certainty, but I presume the Antigone characters differed only in costume.

¹²⁹ The presence of Sophocles' Antigone on stage is, to the best of my knowledge, unique in Fuentes Mares.

an ideological debate in which Antígona's valuation of human life is pitted against the abstractions of revolution and command structures. The composition of this exchange mirrors the Greek soldier's narration of the struggle between Antigone and Creon. Sophoclean excerpts are here used to create a structural near-symmetry. Amid the Greek soldier's narration, Creon's edict is put at the forefront. It states,

¿Conociste el pregón que lo prohibía?
¿Y osaste quebrantar tan graves leyes? (Fuentes Mares 1969: 84).
You were aware of the proclamation which prohibited it?
And you ventured to break such grave laws?

This exchange corresponds to Soph. *Ant.* 446-449,

ΚΡΕΩΝ - σὺ δ' εἶπέ μοι μὴ μῆκος, ἀλλὰ συντόμως,
ἤδησθα κηρυχθέντα μὴ πράσσειν τάδε;
ΑΝΤΙΓΟΝΗ - ἤδη· τί δ' οὐκ ἔμελλον; ἐμφανῆ γὰρ ἦν.
ΚΡΕΩΝ - καὶ δῆτ' ἐτόλμας τοῦσδ' ὑπερβαίνειν νόμους;

CREON – But you, tell me, not at length, but briefly. Were you aware of the edict forbidding this?
ANTIGONE – I was aware. How could I not be? For it was well known.
CREON – And yet you dared to transgress these laws?

The language in Fuentes Mares combines two questions which are separated in the Greek by Antigone's affirmation. The separation heightens Creon's incredulity at the fact that Antigone unapologetically chose to defy his command. Fuentes Mares' Antígona likewise appears before an awestruck group of revolutionaries, and she openly defies them, claiming a moral high-ground.¹³⁰ The next passage, in which Sophocles' Antigone speaks, presents a fragment of her speech to Creon in which she prioritizes divine law over the edicts of a mortal ruler.

¹³⁰ On stage, Antigone confronts four revolutionaries, although Juan and Antonio act as her main speaking opponents.

No fue Zeus quien a mi me las dictara,
ni es esta la justicia que entre hombres
establecen los dioses de la muerte.
No pensé yo que los pregones tuyos,
siendo el hombre mortal, vencer pudieran
la ley no escrita y firme de los dioses.

[...]

No iba
a exponerme al castigo de los dioses
violando yo esta ley, por arredrarme
ante ningún mortal (Fuentes Mares 1969: 85).¹³¹

It was not Zeus who decreed them for me,
nor is this that justice which
the gods of death establish among men.
I did not think that your proclamations,
since man is mortal, could topple
the stern and unwritten law of the gods.

[...]

I was not about to
open myself up for punishment from the
gods by violating this law, by cowering
before any mortal.

In Fuentes Mares, the revolutionary Antígona makes no mention of divine law. Like her ancient precedent, she privileges a concept above the commands dictated by those in power. However, instead of upholding divine law over mortal edicts, Antígona holds an abstract ideal of humanity over personal relations, familial piety, and societal and revolutionary obligations.

As we see throughout the play, Antígona repeatedly refers to an ideal of humanity, and her arguments revolve around a concept of intrinsic human value. At first, she has difficulty expressing this view to the other revolutionaries. Her initial acquiescence to the planned attack signals Antígona's failure to defend her humanist ideology. She cannot refute the *partido*'s command because there is an element missing from her ideation, the human potential for change and growth.

Antígona's choice to defy her orders is motivated by what she sees in the train station. Among a group of children playing, an innocent child smiles at her, diffusing her resolve and compelling her to retract her actions. The children's innocence becomes the crux of her later argument in defense of her actions. She states,

¹³¹ Corresponds to Soph. *Ant.* 450-460

¡Si, fue por ellos! Cuando dejé el bolso y me retiraba, uno de aquellos niños me miro y me sonrió... ¡Jamás podré olvidar aquella sonrisa inocente!... Era la de un niño que no tenía por qué morir. ¡Y no lo dejé morir! (Fuentes Mares 1969: 97).

Yes, it was for them [the children]! When I had set down the purse and was leaving, one of those kids looked at me and smiled...I will never be able to forget that innocent smile!... it was the smile of a child that did not deserve to die. And I did not let him die!

Antígona sees humanity's origins and potential embodied in a single instance. The children come to represent humanity's value and its potential for change and growth.¹³² Recognizing this potential emboldens Antígona's ideology. If humans can change, their life always has value and should be regarded as sacred. In contrast, Antonio and Juan deny this potential and maintain that social restructuring is necessary for a 'new man' to emerge. In their view, this necessitates a violent uprooting of the current system. Antígona refutes this reductionist claim stating,

¡La única novedad del hombre es la de ser hombre y no utensilio! (Fuentes Mares 1969:100).

Man's only novelty is that of being man and not a tool!

In her view, a realization of shared humanity must precede any attempt for social change. Antígona the would-be terrorist is now replaced by an Antígona who defends the intrinsic value of human life. Though she espoused humanist ideals from the beginning, Antígona seemed ready to cast her values aside for the sake of revolution. This faltering Antígona disappears once she defies her orders. She can no longer fathom ideas of objectification, reduction, or devaluation. Antígona's transition is crucial for framing the play's final prescriptions. It contrasts starkly with her opponents and their actions of objectification and oppression.

¹³²Children in tragedy tend to symbolize the future. In Latin American adaptations, Antigone is often cast in the role of a mother or a potential mother. See Fradinger 2018.

The reframed object of Antígona's rebellion here becomes especially important. Though supposedly opposed to the abuses of the status quo, the revolutionaries end up engaged in equivalent actions of repression and reduction. This replication of faults is striking if we look at the class and gender dynamics on display in Antígona's main confrontation. In their ideological attack, Juan and Antonio treat Antígona with dismissive language that suggests a replication of abuse, namely a perpetuation of class and gender discrimination. We will see that Fuentes Mares appropriates some of the dynamics of Sophocles' original and compounds them with contemporary cultural ideas about class and gender.

Juan is more obvious in his disdain for Antígona. Upon meeting Antígona, he calls her naïve, a 'sentimental revolutionary', and proceeds to discredit her revolutionary fervor by ascribing to her a desire for cocktail parties and bourgeois excess (Fuentes Mares 1969: 69). Though we can ascribe a general misogynistic demeanor to Juan, his antipathy towards Antígona would seem to be motivated most prominently by class resentment.¹³³ His qualms about Antígona are centered around her social provenance. He has created an image of Antígona that is confined to a limited set of possibilities based on his expectations. For Juan, Antígona's place is not among the revolutionaries. She is in a rebellious stage of adolescence and in truth desires nothing more than to enrage the people who raised her.¹³⁴

Once Antígona refuses to set the bomb on the train, Juan explodes into a tirade which exemplifies his perception of Antígona.

¹³³ In Act I, Juan had unambiguously voiced his distaste for female revolutionaries, regardless of their social background. Juan's prejudiced perspectives on class and gender reinforce one another, though class seems to be his most pressing concern.

¹³⁴ Antígona's parents are vague presences in Fuentes Mares' play. The text suggests that they are part of the state apparatus or are at least favored by the state. The shadow of Antígona's parents looms over her identity as does the shadow of Antigone's older relatives in Sophocles' original.

En lo que a mí toca la verdad es que no me convenció nunca. Pero... ¿Cómo iba a convencerme una señorita de tan buenas familias? ...pura basura, una niña burguesa, buena cuando más para ir a misa de doce con el novio (Fuentes Mares 1969: 86).¹³⁵

As far as I'm concerned, the truth is she never convinced me. But...How was a little lady from such *good families* ever going to convince me? ...pure garbage, a bourgeois girl. At most she is good for going to mass at noon with her boyfriend.

Juan's demeanor reveals that he is hyper-aware of apparent social dynamics and refutes anything which may challenge his worldview. His depiction of Antígona as a socialite, girlfriend, or daughter all place her in a very specific gender and socio-economic frame. These roles all exist in relation to a man or family unit. With this characterization, Juan attempts to dehumanize Antígona and to explicate her actions as a result of her social standing, thereby reducing her agency and potential. By contrast, Antonio's willingness to bring Antígona on board would suggest a different perspective. However, his ultimate repudiation of Antígona employs the same reductive elements.

Antonio's identity is entangled with his revolutionary status. He sees himself and his colleagues as instruments of the *partido*, but even within this context of self-objectification, Antígona's role is limited and stifled by his intervention. His command to set the bomb on the train is intended to force Antígona to abandon her old life, her alternative ideas of revolution, and her humanity. This is evident from the fact that the task was originally given to another member.¹³⁶ When Antígona refuses to abide by his commands, her speech and thought become intolerable to him. Upon Antígona's defiant return, Antonio threatens violence and dismisses her arguments. Fuentes Mares preserves some of the gender and

¹³⁵ The phrase 'de tan buenas familias' often refers to the socially elite with a generational history of power and influence. So-called 'good families' are socially visible, if not political influential, and are entrenched in the status quo. See Pérez Domínguez 2012. Read against the Sophoclean text, this phrase is highly ironic considering Antigone's incestuous origins.

¹³⁶ The task was originally assigned to an unseen revolutionary named Fausto.

class dynamics of Sophocles' original and has his Creon equivalents operate in a manner reminiscent of their ancient model.

The revolutionaries' final act is that of silencing Antígona. It is here that they force her to sign the fake confession as a form of 'insurance'. This note details her supposed involvement in a failed terrorist attempt and describes her change of heart in a manner that disregards her preceding explanation. The note is intended to suppress any action she may take against the organization, be it legal or ideological. From that moment, Antígona is politically silenced. To enforce the class and gender divides, and to give the revolutionaries the appearance of an ideological victory, the false confession fabricates a scenario in which Antígona turns back solely because of what the revolutionaries call 'her father's miraculous intervention'. We are not told what the revolutionaries mean by this, and the wording of the confession is never revealed. This false scenario in which her father dissuades her actions confines Antígona to the imagined roles Juan has crafted for her. She functions within a bourgeois family unit, and she does so only in direct relation to a man. Contrary to what we might expect, this confession is written by Antonio and not Juan. This goes to show that Juan and Antonio's actions amount to the same thing. They are both active when the revolutionaries inflict a coerced silence upon Antígona. As is the case in Sophocles' original, masculine authority figures first attempt to delegitimize their opponents. When their ideas prove persistent, they respond by enforcing silence. Forcing Antígona to sign the confession is ultimately an act of violence analogous to the moment in which Sophocles' Antigone is walled off from society.

Fuentes Mares' reflection on the class and gender dynamics within this organization is essential to the main pursuit of the play. It exhibits a caution of revolution and an awareness of power's tendency to replicate and stratify. A group which claims to seek

societal change finds itself perpetuating the same stratifications it claims to despise. Their desire for change will not prove conducive to a better society. Their success would lead only to a shift in the seats of power. This is most evident if we consider that these anti-state revolutionaries are cast in the role of Creon, a role typically, in other adaptations, occupied by the state or the oppressor. In rebelling against the group, Antígona is not upholding the status quo. She is instead revealing the broken nature of power systems and their replication of abuse. She is rebelling against their reductive conception of humanity. The class and gender divide inflicted by society and perpetuated by the revolutionaries causes yet another fundamental problem, as the failure to recognize a shared humanity ultimately sows the seeds of violence and oppression. The imprint of class resentment in Fuentes Mares' narrative demonstrates one of the many challenges which must be surmounted before a genuine revolution, one where man overcomes his own misery, can be achieved.¹³⁷ These notions permeate Antígona's final exclamation as she departs at the end of the play.

The play concludes as Antígona is forced to leave the revolutionaries' basement. Her final words are a refutation of their violent methods. She screams,

¡Olvidáis que el hombre existe! (Fuentes Mares 1969: 103).

You forget that man exists!

Antígona's words are met with ridicule by the revolutionaries, who mimic them as they laugh at their supposed banality. Nevertheless, these words cut to the core of an ideological struggle very present in Mexican culture. What are we to do when our attempts for change are met with violent repression? To better understand this struggle, it is essential to think of Tlatelolco and remember that this play was first performed following a government sanctioned massacre of civilians.

¹³⁷ See note 13.

The Tlatelolco Massacre of October 2, 1968 was the violent culmination of months of conflict between a student movement and the Mexican government.¹³⁸ The student movement aimed to pressure the national government to enact a more open and transparent democracy.¹³⁹ It sought to capitalize on the limelight cast on Mexico as it hosted the 1968 Olympics to amplify its demands and attract international attention.¹⁴⁰ Violent suppression was a constant throughout these protests. This violence reached a climax on October 2nd when students and community members were beaten and gunned down by police forces. The death toll of the massacre remains unclear but is estimated by the foreign press and human rights groups to range between 300 and 400 casualties.¹⁴¹ The massacre signaled an abrupt end to the student protests. In the end, there was widespread acknowledgment that an organized, peaceful movement, which sought to make the government acknowledge the agency of its human subjects, was extinguished with violence and impunity.¹⁴²

The anger and disillusionment born from this incident deeply affected Mexican thought and identity for years to come.¹⁴³ It is impossible to know for certain how much of Fuentes Mares' script was written or modified in response to the massacre before opening night (eight days later). What is clear is that the political context would undoubtedly have shaped the production's reception. The anxieties surrounding the protests, their perceived futility, and the constant threat of violence were all percolating before the culmination of Tlatelolco's tragic events. Tlatelolco marked a concrete shift in consciousness.¹⁴⁴ The

¹³⁸ See Poniatowska 1998. Poniatowska's work is hailed as one of the most culturally important accounts of the events of Tlatelolco. For more on her narrative structure and cultural impact, see Harris 2005.

¹³⁹ Allier-Montañón and Crenzel 2016 details the political climate of Latin American countries in the second half of the twentieth century.

¹⁴⁰ For a list of the student demands and the government's response (or lack thereof) to each, see Pineda Villalpando 2019.

¹⁴¹ See Moore 1998 and 'The most terrifying night of my life' 2008.

¹⁴² See Aguayo 1998.

¹⁴³ Martínez 1972 marks Tlatelolco as the harbinger of a new era of oppression in Mexico.

¹⁴⁴ See Young 1985. Young marks the massacre as the singular moment in which a long-standing truce between twentieth-century intellectuals and the government was shattered.

repression-filled months leading to the massacre would have certainly fostered the anxieties present in Fuentes Mares' adaptation.¹⁴⁵

Tragedies and abuses of power like those seen in Tlatelolco have continued to occur in Mexico.¹⁴⁶ It is my view that the constant violence and the impunity with which it is carried out have desensitized the public and made it wary of organized efforts for change.¹⁴⁷ It is heartbreaking to repeatedly see peaceful movements and congregations met with deadly force, when all they seek is a fair shot at life. Consequently, the desire for change present in the minds of many Mexicans is stifled by a fear of violence and a collective consciousness which is very aware of revolution's human cost. Antígona's final exclamation, 'you forget that man exists', compels us to remember this cost.

We now arrive at an impasse. If Antígona is disassociating herself from this anti-state organization, what exactly is the play's prescription in the face of oppression? Are we simply to grit our teeth and bear abuse? In her final act of defiance, Antígona screams of the existence and importance of man as she leaves the revolutionaries. The group is undaunted and returns to their usual dynamic. Antígona's frustration in these final moments mirrors the earlier words spoken by Sophocles' Antigone as she exits Fuentes Mares' play. Here in their exits, the two Antigone characters are once again entangled. The text reads as follows,

¿A quién imploro
que socorra mi afán, si mis piedades
sólo el nombre de impía me han valido?¹⁴⁸

Whom can I beg
to ease my toil, if my pious acts/mercies
have gained me only the name of impious?

¹⁴⁵ For more on the events of Tlatelolco and the days and events preceding the massacre, see Hernández Gómez 2014. In discussing these 'same anxieties', I am referring to the anger born from widespread inequality and corruption coupled with the fear of violent repression deployed against organized, peaceful, efforts for change.

¹⁴⁶ Sunnucks, Isaac, and Marsh 2018. In 2014, 43 students from the Escuela Normal Rural Isidro Burgos of Ayotzinapa, Guerrero were 'disappeared' after an altercation with the municipal police of nearby Iguala. Despite media attention, this incident remains unresolved. Though cries for justice have remained constant, the students are presumed dead, and the public suspects government involvement in their disappearances.

¹⁴⁷ For more modern *Antigone* adaptations tackling such issues, see Vargas 2013, Weiner 2015, and Schoorl 2017.

Sophocles' Antigone expresses sorrow concerning her fate and family, her unrecognized piety, and the unfulfilled potential that will be cut short by her impending death. In this passage, 'piedades' has an added valence which is not necessarily present in the Greek or English. 'Piedades' has a more common meaning of 'mercies' or 'pities', and it is only via its apposition to 'impía' that the meaning of piety is evoked. The common meaning of the word appears to prefigure Antígona's sparing of the train passengers and her newly affirmed perception of humanity's inherent value. As this passage marks the somber end to the introduction of the second act, it also prefigures Antígona's position at the end of the play. She has claimed a moral standpoint but must pay to abide by its consequences. Although she does not pay with her life, Antígona is left without a community. She has left her family, rejected the upper-class society which saw her grow, and she has been ostracized by the revolutionaries who cannot swallow her ideological stance. Though she entered the revolutionaries' ranks in a certain state of liminality, by the end of the play Antígona is alone. She exits in a state of social death.¹⁴⁹ The question of whether she will remain in this state is left to the audience.

Like her Sophoclean model, Antígona suffers because of her adherence to her beliefs. She does not seem to sway the revolutionaries. Presented with this apparent futility, what is it then that the play advises? Is it simply inaction and resilience to oppression? The historical context of the play tells us that humanity is not properly valued, and as such violence will continue so long as ideological confrontations lack the baseline of inherent human value. This is a rather pessimistic reading. However, if we reconsider Antígona's

¹⁴⁸ Fuentes Mares 1969: 85-86. Corresponds to Soph. *Ant.* 923-24.

¹⁴⁹ See Weiner 2020. Weiner notes this similar stage of liminality in Sophocles' *Antigone* with a relevant discussion of Antigone's self-fashioning as a metic (resident alien) in Soph. *Ant.* 850-52. He observes the evolution of this liminality in Perla de la Rosa's *Antígona: las voces que incendian el desierto* (2004).

newly found status as an outsider, we can read her actions as a personal triumph - a revelation of potential and shared humanity born from empathy and compassion.

As we reach the end of Fuentes Mares' work, Antígona is endowed with a potential that is not afforded to her ancient predecessor. Antígona is alive. She is alone and isolated, but she is also restored and empowered by her reinforced ideology. She will continue to be challenged, as she now sets off to face a world which continuously fails to acknowledge what now seems undeniable to her.¹⁵⁰ Antígona initially joined this organization due to her anger and disillusionment in the status quo. These feelings do not disappear. Her dialogue in Act II is marked by unmistakable anger and frustration. However, Antígona does not allow her anger to erase the humanity of her opponents. If anything, we can interpret this anger as a sign of life and as a promise of Antígona's future struggles. Whatever suffering may accompany her new solitude is dwarfed by her realization of shared humanity. As the culmination of Antígona's ideological triumph, her final exclamation is a call for self-actuation, a measured yet poignant effort for change which asks us to see ourselves in others. This reflection goes beyond simple empathy and asks us to see also what we could become if given the opportunity to change. This idea is crucial. It explains her desire to return to the basement, her anguished pleas at the play's conclusion, and it directly corresponds to the sentiments felt by those protesting oppressions in times of turmoil. Even in times of intense loss, life affords us the possibility of change.

Like the Mexican people, the characters in this play acknowledge the problems of a deeply broken system. Understandably, they desire radical change. However, the mechanism

¹⁵⁰ Honig 2013. Honig does not address Fuentes Mares, but she is useful for thinking through Antigone's humanism. As opposed to the 'mortalist humanism' that Honig sees in Sophocles' Antigone, Fuentes Mares' humanism seems to be grounded on life and the potential for change. His reimagining of Antigone carves out a space in which the figure of Antígona seeks to establish a widespread concept of shared humanity before meaningful change can be enacted. Opposing sovereignty is not yet a concern, as doing so with a faulty foundation would lead to a reversal and replication of abuses.

through which this is to be accomplished creates a rift between seemingly allied ideations. It is here that Fuentes Mares' adaptation shines. It forces the audience to wrestle with questions of revolution, violence, and power dynamics as it is compelled to pit them against the human cost of enacting change. It is not a clear call for action, nor is it simply an anguished plea for acknowledgment of a destructive situation. It is a demand for self-realization and for a recognition of the elements which bind us to each other, regardless of the distinctions impressed on us by the society we live in.

III. The More Things Change...: Critiquing a history of oppression with Olga Harmony's *La Ley de Creón*

Olga Harmony's *La ley de Creón* is probably the most complicated adaptation to be analyzed in this thesis due to its use of temporality, setting, character dynamics, and its expansive length.¹⁵¹ Harmony's play examines ideas of resistance and group membership as well as revolution and its broken promises. The play is built on humanist principles. It generally criticizes society's tendencies to marginalize, exploit, and abuse the vulnerable under the false banner of progress. For all its humanist fundamentals, however, an almost haunting sense of hopelessness and pessimism is instilled throughout the words of *La ley de Creón*, creating a palpable tension between the ideals of human progress and the realities of human callousness. This play goes beyond simply being skeptical of revolution's promises and stages a tragedy in which the advent of revolution signals loss and stagnation. This play observes a persistent lack of change in our societal systems and is disheartened in measure. By the tragedy's end, there is little hope to be found in Harmony's adaptation. We are instead left to contemplate the cyclical nature of abuse inherently found in systems of governance predicated upon ideas of violence, difference, and a lack of basic human value.

In this chapter, I will examine *La ley de Creón* as an adaptation of Sophocles' *Antigone* with three preeminent accomplishments: (1) Harmony's play adapts the story of *Antigone* in a revolutionary setting to critique Mexican dynamics of class, ethnicity, and gender, (2) it traces a transnational and transhistorical record of social stratifications, oppressions, and abuses, (3) and it comments on social memory and its failings in preventing the recursive enforcement of social stratifications and abuses. These points coalesce to present a disheartened analysis of revolution and its aftermath, wherein suffering

and stratifications are inevitably reinscribed into society's fabric due to a lack of basic human valuation. In order to accomplish these feats, Harmony transports the myth of *Antigone* to the advent of the Mexican Revolution. In so doing, Harmony infuses the ancient myth with the gender and class attitudes of its historical setting. She preserves and highlights many of the dynamics present in Sophocles' original and lifts them as mirrors to reflect contemporary societal problems.

With this analysis I wish to show that Harmony's play asks us to consider the disparities present in Sophocles' original, the period-specific injustices of the play's setting, and the contemporary stratifications afflicting Mexico in its contemporaneity. This chapter will argue that Harmony's piece offers little hope for change and progress and is instead a denunciation of systems that have proven themselves to be irredeemable even after centuries of struggles.

Structure of Analysis

Harmony's play is rich in meaning and complex in its engagements with concepts and traditions. For the sake of facilitating this analysis, I wish to outline the structure of this chapter and establish some guiding principles. I will begin by providing a very brief summary of the overarching plot of Harmony's play. I will then discuss the importance of examining Harmony's engagement with Sophocles' *Antigone* by presenting a few of her play's most prominent invitations to be read alongside the ancient tragedy. In so doing, I aim to highlight the socio-political issues foregrounded through Harmony's engagement. I will likewise make the case for considering the play's temporal setting, the Mexican Revolution, as an equally fruitful and significant component for understanding Harmony's adaptation.

¹⁵¹ Written in 1974 and first performed in 1984 under the Universidad Veracruzana's production, Harmony's play was met positively and received general praise nationwide (see Rabell 1984).

To this end, I will provide some background on the historiography of the Mexican Revolution in the hopes of illuminating Harmony's concern with historical narratives, collective memory, and recursive systems of oppression. Reading Harmony's play through Sophocles' *Antigone* and through a post-revolutionary lens will allow us to read the outcome of both back into to the play's conclusion. We will therefore be able to make some assertions about the play's teleological formulations and will be better equipped to interpret the play's thematic concerns.

Upon providing a brief summary of this adaptation and presenting the guiding principles of my analysis, I will advance my reading of Harmony's play focusing on scenes of special significance. My analysis will be attuned to the aforementioned issues and ideas and will be informed by scholarship of race, class, and ethnicity, as well as concepts from Mexican and Anglo-European feminisms.

Summary

La Ley de Creón is divided into two acts with a total of 14 scenes. The drama unfolds in the Spring of 1910, at the dawn of the Mexican Revolution. Harmony's play tells the story of a wealthy and powerful fictional family which attained and preserved its status through force and the exploitation of lower social classes. The play's narrative showcases the family's perpetuation of oppressions and stratifications from various perspectives, slowly building towards a boiling point that culminates in the family's undoing. Sophocles' *Antigone* is evoked throughout this adaptation, and thus influences our understanding of the narrative action as well as the play's characterization and use of audience expectations.¹⁵²

La Ley de Creón is largely the story of a young aristocratic woman named Cristina. Along with her sister Isabel, Cristina is an orphan who lost her parents at an early age. The

sisters were adopted by their uncle Marcos and raised in a sheltered environment with extreme economic privilege.¹⁵³ Referred to with deference as ‘Don Marcos’ by many of the play’s characters, Marcos is an *hacendado*, or an estate holder, with a great amount of power and authority over his land and the people who depend on it.¹⁵⁴ He is the sole proprietor of his estate and has governmental support for his claims to land and power (more on this below). His son Ignacio, a highly educated young man, is engaged to Cristina.

The conflicts in Harmony’s play are complex and multifaceted but are all prompted by the death of Cristina’s childhood friend, Lorenzo, at the hands of soldiers. Lorenzo is markedly portrayed as a member of a lower social class. He is part of a community that has been wronged by Marcos and his family. Throughout the adaptation, this group is referred to as a ‘pueblo’ and its people as people from the pueblo. It is important to note that pueblos in Mexico are often depicted as ‘other’ environments detached from urban or industrial life. There is an aspect of rurality implied by this term. In addition to its geographical connotations, the term also has strong associations with economic scarcity and indigeneity, though this need not necessarily be the case.¹⁵⁵ In Harmony’s adaptation, the pueblo is conveyed as an environment subservient but external to Marcos’ estate.¹⁵⁶ The text suggests that Marcos’ family seized land that belonged to this community at some unspecified point in time. Lorenzo’s people were left without agricultural land and cast into hunger.

¹⁵² A full translation of this play is included in the appendix.

¹⁵³ Though the relation is not explicitly stated in the text, Marcos appears to have been the brother of the sisters’ mother or father.

¹⁵⁴ ‘Don’ is a marker of respect in one’s address to a male figure throughout much of Latin America. It is usually reserved for older men in veneration of their age or social position. The feminine equivalent is ‘doña’.

¹⁵⁵ In media, pueblos tend to be presented in contrast to so-called developed areas and populations. For more on pueblos as a denominator for Mexican indigenous communities, see Ruiz Medrano 2011. In Harmony’s adaptation, the pueblo is conveyed as the environment external to Marcos’ estate. Connotations of rurality and scarcity are marked and highlighted, and a strong sense of indigeneity and ‘othering’ is folded into the play’s language.

¹⁵⁶ Henceforth in this chapter, I may refer to the people of the pueblo as such or as ‘pueblerinos’ (‘pueblerinas’ in the feminine), which holds the same meaning. I will avoid referring to them as pueblo people to avoid any possible confusion with the Native American groups of the Southwestern United States.

Accompanied by men of the pueblo and Francisco, who is another childhood friend of Cristina, Lorenzo makes a simple request of Marcos. He wants Marcos to grant his people permission to farm in a fraction of the land he is not using. Marcos rejects this request offhand. The men then state that they will enter by force if necessary. When they make good on their warning, government soldiers stationed at Marcos' request open fire and kill Lorenzo. Francisco and his remaining companions are forced to flee. Marcos commands the soldiers to shoot any further trespassers. He proclaims that no one is to bury Lorenzo until Francisco and his surviving companions turn themselves in. Francisco's eventual return is foreshadowed throughout the play as the advent of revolution. The events leading to Lorenzo's death precede the play's action, but they are revealed gradually as the narrative advances. This conflict contextualizes the action of Harmony's adaptation.

Harmony's play interrogates Cristina's beliefs and relationships throughout. The adaptation makes use of dialogue and character relations to slowly reveal perpetrated abuses, their consequences, and each character's vested interests in advancing oppressions or liberation. As the play advances, Cristina's words cost her the sympathy and support of most of her confidantes. However, her conversations reveal that for the play's characters complicity towards abuse is grounded in apathy or prejudice. By the play's conclusion, we bear witness to a mostly isolated Cristina who has the support only of her beloved, Ignacio. The play's use of a choral ending further crystalizes the stratifications examined throughout the adaptation. When the final chorus of women claim Cristina and Ignacio's struggle as their own, along with their corpses, the men of the pueblo reject this same claim to kinship.

Reading with Sophocles

Reading Harmony's play with knowledge of Sophocles' *Antigone* opens up a myriad of interpretative possibilities. The presence of the ancient tragedy in Harmony's adaptation foregrounds certain social and political concerns and creates expectations regarding generic elements and character dynamics. Reading Harmony's play with a conscious consideration of the Sophoclean tragedy directs us to take special note of Harmony's choices in shifting the myth of Antigone to a very specific Mexican setting. As our mind is driven to Sophocles, we will see that the ancient play accentuates the sociopolitical divisions of the modern adaptations. In corresponding fashion, Harmony's play compels us to reconsider the ancient piece and to interrogate its use of characterization and deployment of social constraints.¹⁵⁷

At first glance, the plot of Harmony's play seems rather different from that of Sophocles' *Antigone*. However, the concerns and critiques expressed in Harmony's play are intensified when examined through a Sophoclean lens. Though *La ley de Creón* diverges from its ancient predecessor, Harmony's adaptation invites us to map Sophocles' *Antigone* back onto the ongoing narrative. The play is very deliberate in its positioning and asks to be read with and against the Sophoclean original. The most obvious invitation for reading this work in tandem with Sophocles' *Antigone* is the title of the play itself. As a title, *La ley de Creón* (Creon's Law) immediately evokes a connection to its ancient Greek predecessor. However, this connection is complex and already indicates a repositioning of the Antigone myth. *La Ley de Creón* directs our mind to Sophocles' *Antigone*, however, it does not take us to Antigone herself. This is especially marked in a Mexican context, as most adaptations

¹⁵⁷ In this respect, the play operates as a critical insight into both the ancient and the receiving culture, as suggested by Lorna Hardwick in her *Reception Studies* (2003). Through the text, we "participate in the continuous dialogue between the past and the present and also require some 'lateral dialogue' in which

of Sophocles' *Antigone* will have her name in the title.¹⁵⁸ By shifting the focus to Creon and, more specifically, to his edict prohibiting the burial of Polynices, Harmony appears to stake her interest in a particular aspect of *Antigone*'s story. The associations that stem from the title foreground an engagement with themes of power, its abuses, and its arbitrary nature. The title also compels us to associate Marcos' command prohibiting the burial of Lorenzo with Creon's famous edict. In doing so, we are encouraged to look upon the two characters, Marcos and Creon, as corresponding figures. If we accept this correspondence, it therefore follows that certain expectations arise for other characters and character dynamics in Harmony's narrative.

Though their characterization is somewhat different, as will be explored below, the play guides us to map aspects of Antigone's character onto Cristina. Likewise, Isabel shares important parallels with Ismene, as does Ignacio with Haemon. A priest figure in Harmony's play evokes but recontextualizes the presence of the seer Tiresias. Some of the expectations born from these parallels are subverted in Harmony's work while others are upheld and foregrounded. Given the importance of the two characters for the development of the play, I turn our attention to Marcos and Cristina in order to begin demonstrating Harmony's use and reframing of expectations born from an engagement with Sophocles' *Antigone*.

In contrast to the ancient play, Harmony's Marcos is never raised to the position of a second protagonist. Nevertheless, sympathy is evoked for his character in a manner reminiscent of Sophocles' Creon. Though he is undeniably marked with the language of tyranny, it is not difficult to imagine that Marcos' capitalist and conservative rhetoric of merit and progress would resonate with a section of the audience. Marcos' appeals to

crossing boundaries of place or language or genre is as important as crossing those of time" (Hardwick 2003: 4).

¹⁵⁸ Of the Mexican adaptations mentioned in this thesis, only Bárbara Colio's *Usted está aquí* (*You Are Here*) and Alejandro Carrillo Castro's *El Rey Creón* join Harmony's play in omitting Antigone from its title.

authority, legality, and socioeconomic advancement could be easily understood and accepted. The character is irredeemable from a progressive standpoint due to his abuse of power and blatant disregard for the humanity of others. However, he is simultaneously characterized as a caring head of family who adopts orphaned sisters and runs a successful estate with hopes of entrusting it to his descendants.¹⁵⁹

Like Sophocles' Creon, Marcos' blind obstinacy will ultimately cause him to lose his family and his position of power, the very things he sought to preserve and protect. Ignacio and Cristina are gunned down, and Isabel is hinted to sever ties with him by the play's conclusion. Marcos himself is said to abandon the estate he so fervently defended upon losing his children. Furthermore, Marcos is presented as a character who suffers from a chronic health condition. None of these factors excuse Marcos' behavior, but they parallel characteristics which evoke sympathy for the ancient ruler of Thebes. As we will see, Marcos believes that softening his convictions would lead to societal dysfunction. He believes himself responsible for ruling over and defending a delicate societal balance which necessitates strength and rigidity. Like Creon, Marcos is unyielding in the management of his household, and like Creon, he loses everything due to his stubborn relentlessness. In concert with Marcos' softer presentation as a doting father and family head, these characteristics likely suffice to evoke a sense of pity for the character's eventual reversal of fortune.

Though present in the ancient model, sympathy for a Creon-like character is very unusual for a Latin American adaptation of *Antigone*. Having said this, however, the sympathy evoked for Marcos does not appear to raise his arguments to the level of 'right vs.

¹⁵⁹ In Scene V, Marcos speaks to Ignacio about the future of the estate and his family beyond his death. He speaks of ensuring that the family is cared for financially and legally protected in the event of his demise (Harmony 2001: 17). The second half of Scene VI sees repeated use of the language of fatherhood used in

right' understood in Hegelian readings of Sophocles' *Antigone*. As noted by Romulo Pianacci, Creon is typically cast in the role of the irredeemable oppressor when he appears in Latin America.¹⁶⁰ This is likely the case for Marcos as well. The estate head's dehumanizing language, his abuse of legality, and the fact that his actions have devastating consequences for an entire population make it so that he cannot be interpreted as a sensible alternative to Cristina's humanist values and pursuits. Marcos is presented as a complicated version of Creon who intensifies his convictions and exacerbates his failings. In a similar vein, Cristina is rather peculiar as an Antigone figure.

Unlike what is considered to be typical for *Antigones* in Latin America, Cristina is not held up to be an undisputable heroine and is instead given space to be flawed and hesitant.¹⁶¹ She spends most of the play in a state of transformation. Cristina is slowly becoming aware of injustice as a result of personal tragedy, but she lacks the impulsive fervor of the Sophoclean Antigone or many other Latin American equivalents. She spends most of the play attempting to understand herself and the world around her until her most marked action, that of leaving the confines of the household, results in her immediate death. Marking a sharp departure from Sophocles, Harmony's Antigone character wants to live. She prioritizes life (her own and that of others), and she constantly imagines a world in which she happily fulfills many of the societal expectations assigned to her by her upbringing. Her character arc is one of slow and continuous realization that wishes to understand and to rectify her role in an oppressive system. This awareness is never shown to lead Cristina to long for death or to see death as a payment that is absolutely needed to bring

reference to Marcos, and Cristina herself speaks of the image she holds of Marcos as a caring and gentle father figure (Harmony 2001: 23).

¹⁶⁰ For an overview of Creon's role in Latin America see Pianacci 2015. For more on Hegel's legacy and interpretations following Hegel see Thompson 2014, Rawlinson 2014.

¹⁶¹ See Bosch 1999 and Pianacci 2015. Both scholars engage with the history of *Antigone* in Latin America. General assertions can be useful for identifying major trends in the literature. In this sense, Both

about her goals. It is through these choices in Harmony's characterization that many of the play's thematic concerns are addressed and foregrounded.

Questions of burial, kinship, death, and the divine are all found in this play and become intensified when we adopt a Sophoclean lens for interpretation. Notions of gender, power, and resistance present in the Sophoclean text are either mirrored or intensified in *Laley de Creón*. In addition, Harmony's play explores issues of hatred, ethnicity, and class, none of which are as readily apparent in Sophocles' *Antigone*. Whatever similarities exist in the narrative structure of the two plays serve further to mark deviations as deliberate and significant. The catalyst for the adaptation's conflict is the unburied body of Lorenzo, which signals a concern for burial rites. However, burial rites quickly become secondary to the adaptation's interrogation of the social stratifications caused by class and gender. Ideas of kinship are also foregrounded, but given that Lorenzo is not Cristina's blood relative, they are interrogated in the context of membership and community. Reading through a Sophoclean lens, we can see that Harmony's *Antigone* uses its awareness of Sophoclean character relationships to weigh familial bonds against societal obligations. However, no particular familial bond is prioritized or pursued in Cristina's struggle to the extent that Sophocles' *Antigone* character prioritizes her familial relationship to Polynices. Ideas of kinship are diminished to demarcate more strongly the forces that strain blood relations and stratify communities.¹⁶² Sorority as a concept lurks in the background of Harmony's adaptation, but it is not fully realized or elevated to the level of solidarity. Isabel's

Bosch and Pianacci regard the figure of Antigone in Latin America as indisputably heroic. I use their claim to remark on the exceptionality of an Antigone marked by self-reflection and hesitation.

¹⁶² See Söderbäck 2012. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Fanny Söderbäck observes that adaptations of *Antigone* have three elemental components: the narrative revolves around kinship burial rites, Antigone is always a woman, and she always fights against state power in some way. Harmony's adaptation further complicates this model: burial rites are present but deprioritized, and they do not involve close kin; furthermore, our Antigone character, Cristina, fights a power with state backing, but she does not fight state power directly. Cristina's fight is mostly ideological, and she seems to be fighting a product of the state as opposed to the state itself.

characterization is complicated as she holds unsteady allegiances with both the establishment and Cristina. Notions of divine law and mortal ethics are also explored, but Harmony complicates the dichotomy by making her priest character a part of the state apparatus. Cristina's eventual break with her faith favors a brand of humanism above divine dictates, or what would ostensibly be considered divine laws.

In addition to creating character and thematic expectations, reading through a Sophoclean lens creates certain generic expectations for Harmony's play. As an audience, we are guided to expect tragedy. We await a reversal of fortune for Marcos, Cristina, or the members of their family. We might also expect any of the multiple choruses represented in Harmony's play to reflect a certain unified interpretation of reality, or act as a communal response to the events of the play.¹⁶³ However, the diverse and often oppositional existence of these choruses directs us to think in terms of divergent communities and fragmented narratives. Simply by subverting and splintering the use of the chorus, Harmony creates invitations for us to reflect upon notions of community, class, and membership status. In presenting her play in this manner, Harmony opens the door for us to think in terms of continuity and disjunction, both locally and universally.

The Myth of the Mexican Revolution

Apart from establishing a link with Sophocles and its reception, Harmony's adaptation is very deliberate about its positioning within a historical context and sets her play at the dawn of the Mexican Revolution (1910). As we will see in the analysis, Harmony showcases some of the pre-revolutionary stratifications that led to the eruption of conflict, mainly through the adaptation's descriptions of the social disparity between estate members

¹⁶³ Harmony's play utilizes multiple choruses composed representing the varied communities which constitute its cast.

and the people of the pueblo. Harmony seems particularly interested in issues of class and ethnicity. The fact that Harmony focuses on some of the causes of revolution and not on the revolution itself is particularly noteworthy, as it foregrounds her interest in the causes of civil strife. Reading Harmony's play with an awareness of this pointed interest and a historical knowledge of the revolution's aftermath will shape our understanding of the play itself. Therefore, it is worth prefacing our analysis with a short discussion of the revolution's historiography and Harmony's position therein.

Harmony's play is written at a time in which the impact of the Mexican Revolution becomes a serious point of intellectual contention. Harmony's contemporaries formed part of a historiographical current that saw extensive disconnections between the promises of the revolution and the realities found in its aftermath. Historiographical writings contemporary to Harmony's play generally hold that the revolution did not enact major ideological changes in Mexico. This issue holds special relevance for our engagement with Harmony's play.

Alan Knight, a historiographer examining myth and legacy of the Mexican Revolution, remarks on the importance of the revolution for the creation of a national identity. He examines the revolution's power as a national myth.¹⁶⁴ Though Knight somewhat refutes the centrality of the myth for Mexico's development and political progression, he nevertheless highlights the manner in which the myth-like quality of the Revolution's narrative has been perceived by historiographers as a definitive factor influencing the perpetuation of institutions and political systems. Like Knight, David C. Bailey observes that the Mexican Revolution's narrative of success begins to be questioned

¹⁶⁴ See Knight 2010.

in the 1960s.¹⁶⁵ Later scholarship seems to agree that Mexico saw an unfulfillment of the hopes invested in the revolution. Bailey is particularly important for representing readings of the Mexican Revolution examining the conflict as a class struggle, an idea that is especially pertinent for Harmony's adaptation. In his survey of the revolution's historiography, for example, Bailey states that Marxist accounts of the revolution depict the conflict as pro-capitalist and concerned with enthroning political centrism.

Following the Mexican Revolution (1910-1917), the struggles and burdens of the working classes continued to benefit only a select few empowered and privileged subsets of the population. For some scholars, the period immediately following the revolution was responsible for enshrining capitalism and authoritarianism at the expense of the people, thus perpetuating many of the abuses highlighted by Harmony's adaptation.¹⁶⁶ In her study of post-revolutionary Mexico, Mary Kay Vaughan states that the Mexican Revolution produced a centralized, single-party state that promoted capitalist growth and authoritarianism at the expense of social welfare and democracy.¹⁶⁷

I posit that it is productive to read Harmony's work as one that understands and accepts this shift in thinking about the Mexican Revolution. As I advance my analysis, I aim to demonstrate that in setting her narrative at the eve of revolution, Harmony refocuses our attention on the causes of social conflict, thereby compelling us to reflect on the stagnation of social progress. By highlighting the abuses perpetrated by the powerful within her adaptation, Harmony draws a line between her fictional account of revolution's dawn and historical reality. She frames the causes of revolution as endemic to hierarchical power

¹⁶⁵ See Bailey 1978 and Knight 2010. Both pieces offer a survey of historiographical writings about the Mexican Revolution.

¹⁶⁶ Focused on the study of post-revolutionary Mexico, Vaughan 1999 characterizes the central state that emerged as the 'principal actor and effective manipulator of the masses'. This work also offers a good summary of the revisionist history of the Mexican Revolution after 1968.

¹⁶⁷ See especially Bailey 1978: 16-18.

structures and compels us to question those same structures in a contemporary context detached from fictional narratives.

My reading of *La ley de Creón* considers it a part of a wave of consciousness that examines revolutionary narratives and asks us to revisit them and their surrounding circumstances in order to interrogate our present condition. What changes have been enacted? What oppressions continue? Who is being oppressed? What is the cost of progress? As we will see below, Harmony's answers to these questions are sobering and anguished. By situating her play in this temporal framework, Harmony forms part of an intellectual current that is disillusioned about the revolution and its aftermath. Though this adaptation is presented as specific, local, and contextualized when examined through the historic lens of the Mexican Revolution, reading through Sophocles' *Antigone* makes Harmony's play transhistorical and universal. Reading Harmony's play teleologically, that is to say with an awareness of the revolution's aftermath, we are compelled to reflect on how little has changed between the oppressed and the powerful in the time between Sophocles' *Antigone*, the Mexican Revolution, and Harmony's writing. *La Ley de Creón* ultimately stands as a social document – a record tracing and critiquing a history of social divisions from the ancient Greek theatre to modernity. Considering these interpretative lenses where applicable, I will now advance my reading of Harmony's play, delving into its use of language and its treatment of class, gender, and ethnicity.

Setting the Scene

The opening moments of this adaptation are largely programmatic and establish the key conflicts and concerns of Harmony's play. As noted in the summary above, the primary catalyst for unearthing this play's many conflicts is Lorenzo's death. This event forces the play's characters to grapple with divisions of class and gender and is especially impactful

for Cristina, Isabel, and Nana. The women's reactions to the death of Lorenzo drive the plot for the play's first scene. As the characters on stage assimilate the events occurring around them, we are gradually made aware of their social roles, privileges, anxieties, and the tensions created by the social disparities they come to discover. Cristina's response to Lorenzo's death is of particular importance as it signals the beginning of her awakening and its accompanying isolation. The progression of the scene reveals that many of the stratifications visible in Sophocles' ancient tragedy are preserved, highlighted, and recontextualized as thematic concerns in Harmony's adaptation.

Reading the first scene of this play through the lens of Sophocles' *Antigone* compels us to observe its interest in gender dynamics and sociopolitical conventions. From the moment in which Cristina, Nana, and Isabel begin speaking, we are made aware of the different roles and expectations impressed upon the men and women of this adaptation. As we will see, there is an immediate deployment of static gender constraints and expectations. These are continuously reinforced throughout the play and create the impression of a gender dynamic that is largely polarized and rigidly implemented. Upon hearing of Lorenzo's death, Cristina appears to cry in disbelief and confusion. She seeks to understand the reasons for his sudden demise. Her outcry is presented as follows,

CRISTINA: ¿Por qué dispararon, Nana?

NANA: No te mezcles, Cristina.

[...]

ISABEL: Cálmate, no podemos hacer nada.

CRISTINA: Why did they shoot, Nana?

NANA – Don't get involved (lit. don't get yourself mixed up), Cristina.

[...]

ISABEL – Calm down. We cannot do anything (Harmony 2001: 7).

Unfortunately for Cristina, Nana and Isabel both respond in a manner that leaves her grief and confusion unresolved. The two women attempt to placate Cristina using words that reflect and reinforce the social norms inflicted upon them by the establishment within the adaptation's setting. In the above passage, Isabel and Nana express a sentiment of passivity and helplessness which will be elaborated upon as the scene progresses.¹⁶⁸ It is made clear in the scene's development (and especially so after Marcos' entrance in the second half of the scene) that the women believe themselves impotent to bring about change and that this perceived impotence is born from the social constraints dictated upon them by their gender. The conversations of this first scene inform us about the physical and social limitations impressed upon the women by those in power. This is shown most clearly in Nana and Isabel's response to Cristina's questions.

NANA – Leave it alone, Cristina. Stop asking.

CRISTINA - I want to know what they were doing there, in my uncle's land, and why this is all happening. I just want to know, Nana, there is nothing wrong with that.

ISABEL – Uncle forbade us from leaving the house today. He did not want us to know anything.

CRISTINA – I peered outside. I saw everything, but I understand nothing.

NANA – It is better that way (Harmony 2001: 7).

Isabel's words reveal that the sisters live under the authority of their uncle and are subject to the limitations he imposes. It is not possible for them to leave the house without approval from Marcos. Their access to information is correspondingly limited in accordance with the physical spaces they are allowed to inhabit. Nana's appeals to Cristina entreats her to abide by the constraints imposed upon her access to information. From Nana's perspective, it is better if Cristina does not understand what is happening outside the estate. As we will see,

¹⁶⁸ This sentiment will be revisited and repeated by Isabel in Act II, Scene IV, where Isabel explicitly refuses to help Cristina's newly adopted cause because of her belief in their powerlessness and the futility of their actions.

Nana has a vested interest in maintaining the integrity of the estate. For the estate to be maintained, Marcos' authority cannot be challenged.

The directive to stay home, and implicitly to remain in ignorance, is received from Marcos himself. As head of the estate which acts as the play's central setting, Marcos is representative of the established power structures. We have just learned that he has prohibited the women from leaving his estate and has ordered that they do not involve themselves with external matters. As we will see, the women under the power of Marcos and those like him are expected to be apolitical, submissive, and limited in their physical space and social presence. The first scene of this adaptation suggests that Nana and Isabel accept the constraints of gender enforced by the social spaces they inhabit. If we consider that Harmony's adaptation engages deeply with the themes of Sophocles' *Antigone*, we can see that the women's sentiment of powerlessness is highly reminiscent of Ismene's early interaction with Antigone in the Sophoclean tragedy.

ἀλλ' ἐννοεῖν χρὴ τοῦτο μὲν γυναῖχ' ὅτι
ἔφυμεν, ὡς πρὸς ἄνδρας οὐ μαχουμένα·
ἔπειτα δ' οὐνεκ' ἀρχόμεσθ' ἐκ κρεισσόνων
καὶ ταῦτ' ἀκούειν κάτι τῶνδ' ἀλγίονα.
ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν αἰτοῦσα τοὺς ὑπὸ χθονὸς
ξύγγοιαν ἴσχειν, ὡς βιάζομαι τάδε,
τοῖς ἐν τέλει βεβῶσι πείσομαι. τὸ γὰρ
περισσὰ πράσσειν οὐκ ἔχει νοῦν οὐδένα (Soph. *Ant.* 61-68).

But, we must remember that we are women, who cannot fight against men, and then that we are ruled by those whose power is greater, so that we must consent to this and to other things even more painful! So I shall beg those beneath the earth to be understanding, since I act under constraint, but I shall obey those in authority; for there is no sense in actions that exceed our powers.

Like the two women in Harmony's play, Ismene observes and accepts the constraints of gender dictated by her social environment. Though she appears to be equally hurt by Creon's edict prohibiting the burial of their brother, Ismene internalizes the notion that the

constraints of gender are too powerful for the sisters to do anything about the edict. Her reminder to Antigone carries the same force as Nana and Isabel's attempts to placate Cristina. The two women also attempt to remind Cristina of her position and of the futility and impropriety of her involvement. This dynamic is repeated once Marcos joins the conversation and appeals to the same gender constraints with an almost identical use of language.

When Marcos eventually enters on stage, he interrupts the women's conversation. He speaks to Cristina about her wedding and gifts her what appears to be an expensive necklace. Cristina makes it known that she cannot speak of lavish gifts and weddings with everything that is happening 'outside', meaning Lorenzo's death and the suffering of the people from the pueblo. In their ensuing exchange, Marcos' language reveals a concern with the physical boundaries of his estate, which we will see closely align with the discriminatory parameters of class, ethnicity, and gender. His words serve to delineate the play's power dynamics and social stratifications.

Upon welcoming Marcos into their chambers, Cristina and Isabel appeal to their uncle in an attempt to learn the reasons for Lorenzo's death and Marcos' prohibition regarding his burial. When they endeavor to raise these issues, we witness the following exchange:

CRISTINA – Tío, Lorenzo está allá muerto...

ISABEL – ¿Es verdad que no dejará que lo entierren?

MARCOS – Nana, ¿qué les has estado contando?

CRISTINA – Yo lo vi, tío.

MARCOS – ¡Cómo que lo viste! ¿No te había prohibido salir fuera de la casa?
(Harmony 2001: 9).

CRISTINA – Uncle, Lorenzo is dead out there...

ISABEL – Is it true that you will not allow them to bury him?

MARCOS – Nana, what have you been telling them?

CRISTINA – I saw it, uncle.

MARCOS – What do you mean you saw it?! Did I not forbid you from leaving the house?

Marcos' language in this exchange is highly concerned with his authority over physical boundaries. He explicitly states that he had forbidden the women from leaving the household. The boundaries of the household are meant to enforce gender roles and limit the women's sphere of influence and access to information.

This dynamic directly mirrors the expectations of gender that contextualize the original Sophoclean drama.¹⁶⁹ In Sophocles' *Antigone*, Antigone is marked as transgressive partly because she takes action outside of her household. Ancient Athenian civic ideology connected the inside of the household with the female and the outside with the male. These connections were constantly reasserted as natural and proper.¹⁷⁰ Upholding similar divisions, Marcos enforces equivalent gendered constraints by suggesting that women should not get involved in external affairs.¹⁷¹ The language is as follows:

MARCOS – Afuera no pasa nada.

CRISTINA – Sí, tío. Sí está pasando. Y usted viene a hablarme de brillantes raso y encajes.

MARCOS – ¿Te casas o no te casa? De eso se habla a una novia.

CRISTINA – ¿Después de matar a un hombre? ¿Después de disparar a la gente indefensa?

[...]

MARCOS – Escucha, Cristina, las mujeres no deben mezclarse en esto.

[...]

¹⁶⁹Ancient Greek women had a limited sphere of influence and were mostly relegated to their household. Though women of lower social classes were likely forced to leave for work, aristocratic women were largely confined to the household. See MacLachlan 2012, especially chapter 5 which uses a diverse selection of sources to illustrate the lived experience of ancient Greek women of the Classical Period. Likewise, in her analysis of Antigone's moral agency, Foley 2001 notes that virgin daughters had primary responsibility to her family and household and were thus confined by corresponding parameters of propriety (see esp. pp. 172-193).

¹⁷⁰ See Goldhill 1986, in particular p. 70.

¹⁷¹ The divisions Marcos upholds are largely representative of the expected gender roles of the time in Mexico. Remarking on the role of women in Mexico during the 20th Century, Craske 2005 notes that women were expected to fulfill reproductive and domestic expectations which limited their social and political possibilities. Focusing primarily on the mythical revolutionary figure of Adelita, Arrizón 1998 also discusses the roles of women during the revolution and notes their variation according to class dynamics.

CRISTINA – Allá afuera hay mujeres que se mezclan. (Harmony 2001: 9).

MARCOS – Nothing is happening out there.

CRISTINA – Uncle, something is happening out there, and you are here talking to me about diamonds, satin, and lace.

MARCOS – Are you getting married or not? That is what one talks about with a bride to be.

CRISTINA – After killing a man? After firing upon defenseless people?

[...]

MARCOS – Listen, Cristina, women should not involve themselves with these things.¹⁷²

[...]

CRISTINA – Outside there are women who involve themselves.

Marcos' words regarding women's involvement are especially noteworthy as they are identical to Nana's initial appeal to Cristina.

Nana and Marcos are remarkably similar in their handling of Cristina. When Cristina first asks to learn of the situation outside the estate in Scene I, both characters use a form of the verb 'mezclar' (to mix) in order to dissuade Cristina from continuing her inquiries. Nana will likewise echo Marcos' advice from Act I Scene V in Act II Scene IV when she suggests to Isabel that Cristina's honeymoon trip should put enough distance for her to forget the estate's affairs. The similarities between the characters could potentially allude to Nana's continued entrenchment in the estate. In her efforts to preserve the current state of affairs, Nana begins to reflect the language and ideas of the estate head himself. Francisco remarks on this dynamic in the final Scene of Act I, where he criticizes Nana for speaking like the '*patrones*', or the bosses/estate heads. Alternatively, the similarities could be attributed, at least in part, to the characters' parental love for Cristina. Both characters are parental figures to the sisters and would likely have a shared direction in their rearing. Regardless of the cause, Nana is further marked as a member of the household, and her interest in preserving its continuance is highlighted.

The equivalence of language between Nana and Marcos suggests that the gender constraints and divisions active in this adaptation are enforced, and at least partially maintained, via a mechanism of self-policing within the affected group., i.e., the women of the estate. We will see additional instances in later scenes where Isabel will more clearly adopt the language of futility based on notions of gender in her treatment of Cristina. For the moment, it suffices to say that Harmony's adaptation marks a clear distinction between the inside and outside of the estate and assigns gendered expectations accordingly. Women of the estate belong inside. Cristina challenges this notion by stating that the outside world has women who actively involve themselves in the affairs affecting their vicinity.¹⁷³ This challenge is important for shifting our attention to additional demarcations established by the boundaries of Marcos' estate. Beyond acting as a powerful signifier for gender roles and expectations, the boundaries of Marcos' estate highlight deeply entrenched divisions of class and ethnicity. In order to understand these divisions more fully, it is important to consider the play's setting and the thematic concerns which are centered by the play's evocation of the Mexican Revolution.

¹⁷² Literally, 'women should not mix themselves'.

¹⁷³ Cristina's words note a reversal in the sense of civic identity and civic space as they relate the ancient Greek play. Goldhill 1986 and Karakantza 2011 both remark on notions of civic ideology in the ancient Athenian polis as reflected in tragedy. Both scholars highlight citizens' concerns to affirm and reaffirm their civic identity by participating in a civic space. As observed by Cristina's remarks, the women from outside the household have a concern for their community that reflects a sense of civic identity and duty. Although this identity is ultimately suppressed and ignored (first by Marcos and later by the men of the pueblo), it is noteworthy that the women from outside the household are politically active whereas those inside the household are not. Setting aside the fact that women were not regarded as citizens in the ancient Athenian polis, this dynamic could be read as an inversion of notions of civic participation and civic space in ancient Greek tragedy. Though the pueblerinos in general are looking to make ends meet, they are pursuing civic participation. Their pursuit will eventually lead to revolution when both civic space and participation is denied to them. The inside/outside dynamic of the ancient polis is complicated by the pueblo's instrumentality to the status quo – their presence is required for upholding the estate, but the pueblo is not allowed to participate beyond supplying exploited labor.

Scene I via the Mexican Revolution

Examining Harmony's play through the lens of the Mexican Revolution allows us to peer more closely into the class and ethnicity-based distinctions presented in this adaptation. As stated earlier in this chapter, the setting of Harmony's play centers notions of national mythmaking, cultural memory, and the ethics of revolution as important thematic concerns. These issues are all presented, and explored to a degree, in the play's first scene. Much of the discussion pertaining these ideas stems from the words of Nana who finds herself divulging some details about the estate's bloodied history at Cristina's request. Nana's words not only present us with a clearer understanding of the abuses faced by the people of the pueblo, but they also demonstrate the mechanism through which narratives can potentially become complicit in perpetuating abuses. As we will see, simplifying or sanitizing uncomfortable narratives bears the potential to leave oppressive actions unexamined, unchallenged, and ultimately unresolved. When Cristina first wishes to make sense of the violent outburst that resulted in Lorenzo's death, she asks the following of Nana,

¿Quién es culpable entonces y de qué? ¿Quién disparó contra esa gente? Y Lorenzo, ¿Qué pasó con Lorenzo? ... Quiero saber qué hacían allí, en el terreno de mi tío y porqué está pasando todo esto. Sólo saber, Nana, en eso no hay nada de malo (Harmony 2001: 7).

Who is guilty then, and what are they guilty of? Who fired upon those people? And Lorenzo, what happened with Lorenzo? ... I want to know what they were doing there, in my uncle's land, and why this is all happening. I just want to know, Nana, there is nothing wrong with that.

Nana seems reluctant to speak of herself and her history. However, she does not refuse to answer Cristina and Isabel once probed. Her experience and the plight of her people are best surmised in the following passage,

NANA – Don't be afraid. [Hunger] is something people can get used to. The women, they got used to their children dying, to being abandoned by those who did manage to grow older. The men left to look for work elsewhere: they are peons in your uncle's estate, and in other estates. Us girls who still played around were given away as a cargo-loaders, as kitchen girls... well, as that silent and withered army that serves you. Yes, we had already grown used to hunger, but some of the men who went away returned with other ideas... (Harmony 2001: 8).

In narrating her story, Nana tells us that she was taken in by Marcos' family as a child, likely given away due to the lack of resources available to her people for child rearing. Nana remarks that her situation was not atypical for people of her social and ethnic background. Nana describes the widespread death of children due to scarce resources and hunger, the departure of men who would leave to seek employment elsewhere, and the plight of the women who were forced remain only to see their children die or leave them due to economic hardship.¹⁷⁴ In regard to the impetus that ultimately resulted in Lorenzo's death, Nana says the following:

Pues... sucede que mis gentes tuvieron tiempo atrás unas tierras y que esas tierras se perdieron... no hay más, es una historia sencillita. Ahora no tienen tierra, ni tienen donde sembrar; se mueren de hambre (Harmony 2001: 7).

Well... it so happens that in the past, my people had some land, and that land was lost... There is not much more to tell. It is a simple story. Now they do not have land, nor do they have a place to farm. They are dying of hunger.

Nana's words suggest that her people, the people of the pueblo, are beholden to Marcos and subject to his authority. Nana here tells us that her people lost a claim to their land at some point in the past and consequently depend on Marcos for their livelihoods. Though Nana is reserved in her language and can be read to be dismissive of her people's hardships, her language is nevertheless indicative of the societal disparity endemic under the current state of affairs.

¹⁷⁴ Harmony 2001: 8. Nana describes the typical fates of her people and tells us of her own arrival at Marcos' estate. Like other girls her age, she was given away as a child to work as a domestic servant.

Nana's categorization of the past as an '*historia sencillita*' (a simple little story), packages past events as a simple matter which is normal and ought to be expected. Nana's response is likely that of a victim absorbed into an abusive system. She is focused on survival and diminishes the complexities of her circumstances (by literally using the diminutive '*sencillita*' in this case) in order to cope with an overwhelming situation. We will discover in Act II, Scene III that Nana's submissive conduct is due to her concern for Cristina and Isabel and her wish to continue acting as a mother figure for the two sisters. For the time being, we can appreciate that Nana is in a difficult situation and has responded by adopting the language and conduct dictated by those in power. Notably, Nana's propensity to simplify the social complexities dictating the living circumstances of those around her closely corresponds to this play's concerns with memory and mythmaking. It is the very simplification of complex sociopolitical matters that tends to perpetuate and reinscribe oppressive and exploitative societal systems.

In considering Nana's words and her narrative decisions it becomes important to note that one of the primary historical interpretations of the myth of the Mexican Revolution is that it was a popular revolution designed to redistribute wealth and power among the masses.¹⁷⁵ We have seen above that when Cristina inquires about the poor living conditions of the people from the pueblo, Nana explains that they have simply grown accustomed to hunger. The struggles faced by the people of the pueblo as described by Nana are the struggles that would presumably serve to foster the revolution's popularity and its search for social change. However, this dynamic is complicated by the play's concern with the fallibility of memory and mythmaking already exemplified by Nana's choices in presenting

¹⁷⁵ Haynes 1991.

the history of her people. We see this concern play out as Nana continues to discuss the pueblerinos with Cristina and Isabel.

Presumably attempting to comfort Cristina and Isabel, Nana diminishes the weight of her words by attributing to these horrid conditions a sense of normalcy. When the sisters, shocked by Nana's words, begin to think of a method to remedy the situation, we are presented with the following exchange,

ISABEL – But that is horrible! We must speak with the Priest, with the Sisters...

NANA – (*Very softly*). It is an old matter. I think everyone is aware (Harmony 2001: 8).

By noting that the history of the pueblo and its sufferings are common knowledge, Nana makes us aware of a societal failing defined by collective neglect. In this brief exchange, we can see that common knowledge becomes a mechanism for suppression and then oblivion. Nana makes a small but concerted attempt to suppress memories of loss and pain by stating that these events are an old matter, or '*un asunto viejo*'.¹⁷⁶ For Nana, it appears that the age of the matter means that it cannot be changed. This notion is further supported by the fact that the suffering of a group of people is widespread knowledge yet is received with blind eyes and deaf ears. Nana's brief words become an appeal to forgetfulness which primes us to observe how memory has the power to further to stratify and oppress when it becomes corrupted or diminished in the service of obfuscating social realities or dismissing the plight of the marginalized. In describing the pueblerinos' loss of land as an old matter, Nana uses memory to simultaneously contextualize and diminish the efforts of Lorenzo and Francisco.

¹⁷⁶ Harmony 2001: 8.

She provides a justification for their trespassing but undercuts their struggle by presenting an underexamined account of the events that led to the pueblo's current misery. Again, Nana likely does these things in order to survive inside a system that has brutalized her people and deprived her of too much. Nevertheless, she glosses over countless suffering in the hopes of preserving the minimal comfort she has found in her position and its accompanying normalcy. Nana's discussion serves as a point of departure from which we are guided to question the normalcy attributed to social dynamics and the validity of narratives grounded in simplicity. Nana's character compels us to think in terms of cultural memory. The concept of memory will resurface throughout the play as we slowly become aware of the extent of the suffering experienced by the people of the pueblo and will be examined accordingly.

After hearing Nana's account of the pueblerinos' history, Cristina is left unsatisfied by Nana's answers and continues to seek a complete explanation for the transpired events and Lorenzo's demise. She presses Nana for a full account. Nana explains that the men from the pueblo who had left in search of a better fortune eventually returned with new ideas.¹⁷⁷ These ideas are never elaborated, but it is clear that they are born from a dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs and would seek to change it. Nana tells the sisters that the men banded together to ask Marcos for a tiny section of land for farming. When Marcos refused their request, they threatened to enter the unused farmland by force. Upon hearing this from Nana, the sisters respond as follows:

¹⁷⁷ Nana describes the men who returned with revolutionary fervor as having 'other ideas'. When the revolutionaries in Fuentes Mares' adaptation are attempting to mischaracterize and devalue Antígona's revolutionary fervor, they describe her as someone playing at having 'advanced ideas'. I make this connection not to suggest any influence between the plays, but rather to remark on the use of a similar device. Neither Nana nor the revolutionaries are in positions of power, yet they regard ideas of social justice and equity as far-

CRISTINA - ¿Y entraron a la fuerza? ¿Es por eso que tío Marcos mando traer la tropa?

ISABEL - ¿Entraron a la fuerza en un terreno ajeno? Pero eso es robar.

CRISTINA - ¿Robar?

ISABEL – Claro que es robar.

NANA – Ellos lo dicen de otro modo (Harmony 2001: 8).

CRISTINA – And did they enter by force? Is that why Uncle Marcos sent for the troops?

ISABEL – They forcibly entered a land that did not belong to them? But that is stealing.

CRISTINA – Stealing?

ISABEL – Of course it is stealing.

NANA – They speak of it differently.

As is the case with gender distinctions, an important component of the play's moral and social frameworks is predicated on the physical boundaries of Marcos' estate and more abstract ideas of ownership and property. Though Isabel initially appears to empathize with the plight of the people from the pueblo, once she conceives of the break-in as a crossing of legitimate boundaries, she denounces their action and solidifies her stance. Isabel's understanding of physical boundaries directly affects her perception of what is ethically permissible.

In this part of the conversation, we learn that Marcos' estate stands as a strong demarcation of class and ethnicity. The conversation between the three women in this first scene has already shown that those who live within the boundaries of the estate possess wealth and appear to live peacefully. For those outside, life is harsh and uncertain. Outsiders are discussed as people belonging to a different world and from different origins. Though Nana's existence signals some crossing and overlapping of boundaries, Nana's case is rather special. She does not fit readily into either group and is largely rejected by insiders and outsiders. Cristina describes Nana as follows,

fetched and foreign. Though it is to different degrees, both parties conceive of humanist revolutions as unattainable.

CRISTINA – A fuerza de verte en la casa desde siempre, te siento como una parte de ella. Pero hoy, perdóname Nana, hoy te acabo de ver como otra cosa, como un ser distinto. Tu eres de allá, ¿verdad? Pertenece a ellos. Nosotros lo olvidamos pero es cierto: eres una de las mujeres del pueblo (Harmony 2001: 7).

CRISTINA – Because I see you in the house all the time, I think you a part of it. But today, I am sorry, Nana, I have just seen you as something else, as a different being. You are from that place, right? You are one of them. We forgot it, but it is true. You are one of those women from the pueblo.

Cristina's sudden realization is also prompted by the death of Lorenzo. Though she does not do it with malicious intent, Cristina marginalizes Nana with her characterization in two senses. By initially conceiving of her as part of the house, she dehumanizes her and reduces her agency. Second and contradictorily, she marks Nana as an outsider. This is especially jarring, given that Nana has been responsible for her rearing from a young age and has spent most of her life within the household. The men of the pueblo likewise characterize Nana as a pueblo member but denounce her use of language and her affiliation with the household.¹⁷⁸ Neither party accepts Nana in her totality. Cristina's description of Nana further allows us to witness the adaptation's arbitrary distinctions. By linking Nana's identity to 'that place', Cristina further solidifies the distinctions that have already caused violence and death and will continue to do so as the play progresses.

Nana's story provides us with the reasoning behind her attempts to placate Cristina and further explains her proximity in language and ideology to Marcos. Nana's behavior is rooted in trauma and speaks to her conflicted identity as a member of the household and a woman from the pueblo. As the scene ends, Nana reveals that she is Francisco's godmother,

¹⁷⁸ See Harmony 2001: 35. When reading a letter from Nana, Francisco is angered by the fact that Nana speaks of Cristina and Isabel as family and uses a first-person plural to refer to herself and the girls. He states that Nana belongs to the pueblo regardless of her upbringing. However, he undercuts this claim by criticizing Nana's language and characterizing it as identical to that of the 'patrones', estate or land holders who employ and hold authority over the pueblerinos.

a fact that shocks Cristina and prompts us to question Nana's allegiances. With Francisco effectively condemned to death for breaking into the estate, Nana nevertheless bends to the established power structure and seeks to maintain the current state of affairs of the household. Isabel's intervention is even more marked. Isabel construes the transpired events through an absolutely legalistic lens predicated upon the concept of boundaries. In condemning the men's crossing of Marcos' designated boundaries as theft and intrusion, Isabel also dissuades any effort for change and appears to conform to the established norms and expectations. Just as the inside and the outside of the city and household are designated as powerful signifiers in Sophocles' tragedy, the lines that comprise Marcos's estate also delineate what is ethically permissible and socially acceptable. Isabel's conduct is representative of the upper class and its understanding of morality. This view will see itself repeated as the play develops.

The social factors affecting the characters of Harmony's play are largely guided by the parameters of the estate's boundaries. Marcos utilizes his command of these physical boundaries in conjunction with ethnic and class categories to paint a negative picture of the people of the pueblo. In response to Cristina's questions regarding his actions and involvement, he states the following:

MARCOS – Tratan de quitarnos el fruto legítimo de nuestro trabajo. Por la fuerza penetran en nuestra tierra y pretenden apoderarse de ella.

ISABEL – Lorenzo ya murió y probablemente él se lo haya buscado. Pero ¿no podría usted dejar que lo sepulsen?

CRISTINA – Sí, que lo sepulsen. Y lo que ellos piden es un campo pequeñito sin cultivar. ¿No podría...?

MARCOS – ¿Dejarlos? Hay cosas que se hacen por principio, niñas, aunque parezca que no se gana nada. ¿Saben lo que ocurriría si los dejara? Sentaría un precedente que no nos conviene, no sólo a nosotros, sino a ningún hacendado de la región, del país. Pronto todos ellos estarían invadiendo nuestras tierras, despojándonos, quitándonos poco a poco lo que hemos obtenido con sacrificios. No me atrevería a encarar semejante responsabilidad (Harmony 2001: 10).

MARCOS – They are trying to steal the legitimate fruits of our labor. By force they break into our lands and intend to take it over.

ISABEL – Lorenzo is now dead, and he probably sought that end for himself, but would it not be possible for you to allow that he be buried.

CRISTINA – Yes, let him be buried. And the thing they ask for is a tiny untilled field to farm. Could you not just...?

MARCOS – Let them? There are things that one does out of principle, girls, even if it would seem there is nothing to gain. Do you know what would happen if I let them? It would establish a precedent that is not in our best interest, inconvenient not just to us but to all *hacendados* (estate holders) in the region, in the country. Soon all of them would be invading our lands, displacing us, slowly stripping us of everything we have gained through great sacrifice. I would not dare face such grave responsibility.

For Marcos, the boundaries that constitute his land allow no space for compromise. In his mind, he exists as a standard bearer for all estate holders. Marcos believes that his approach for dealing with the recent insurgence of people from the pueblo has the potential to influence the fate of other estate holders with whom he would share a social class and status. In his words, Marcos speaks of a responsibility owed to those with whom he shares a status or history. He mentions the possible ramifications that showing leniency would have on the country as a whole. If he were to acquiesce to the demands of the people from the pueblo, whether that be an additional plot of land or the approval of Lorenzo's burial, he fears he would open the door to widespread challenges to his authority and the authorities of all powerful men who rule over others. If he were to falter in his application of his own law, news of his concession would encourage people under the rule of others to rise up and demand a more prominent place in the world.

Marcos is deeply invested in maintaining the status quo, and he sees his actions as the best method for fulfilling this responsibility. We will see that there is some, albeit perverse, credence to his claims when we examine Act I, Scene IV.¹⁷⁹ Because Marcos has

¹⁷⁹ The choral passage in Scene IV, analyzed later in this chapter, shows the men of Marcos' social status worry when they receive news of the events transpiring in his estate. Likewise, Act II Scene 1 will present a

conceptually linked the physical boundaries of his estate to the fabric that upholds the status quo (a social order that affords him tremendous privilege), he interprets any crossing of boundaries as an act of defiance or violence. Marcos is committed to upholding the static boundaries of his estate. Implicitly, he is also committed to upholding the social stratifications entrenched in his view of the world. In this regard, Marcos's conduct is comparable to that of Creon. Of special relevance is Creon's discussion with Haemon after the former has sentenced Antigone to death.

Creon speaks the following words regarding anarchy, obedience, and the slippery slope of insubordination that may destroy a city if left unchecked.

εἰ γὰρ δὴ τὰ γ' ἐγγενῆ φύσει
ἄκοσμα θρέψω, κάρτα τοὺς ἔξω γένους.
ἐν τοῖς γὰρ οἰκείοισιν ὅστις ἔστ' ἀνὴρ
χρηστός, φανεῖται κὰν πόλει δίκαιος ὢν.
[...]
ἀναρχίας δὲ μεῖζον οὐκ ἔστιν κακόν.
αὕτη πόλεις ὄλλυσιν, ἥδ' ἀναστάτους
οἴκους τίθησιν, ἥδε συμμαχου δοροῦς
τροπὰς καταρρήγνυσιν· τῶν δ' ὀρθομένων σφάζει
τὰ πολλὰ σώμαθ' ἢ πειθαρχία. (Soph. *Ant.* 659-676).

If I nurture disorder in my own family,
how much more will I nurture it among outsiders. For the man who is
righteous in the matters of his household will be seen to be righteous in the city as
well.

[...]

But there is no greater evil than defiance (anarchy).

This thing ruins cities, it devastates households,
it smashes allied spears and causes them to flee. But obedience saves
the lives of most who live upright.

conversation between estate holders and Marcos in which Marcos' words are substantiated by the support of his community. It reads as follows: GENTLEMEN - We learned that you have a problem, Don Marcos, and we were hoping to see you to put ourselves at your disposal. | MARCOS - It was hardly a threat of a problem. And either way, the matter is solved. | GENTLEMEN - (*They lean in.*) Your energy and dynamism are an example to us all. Men like you make this country. | MARCOS - (*He leans in.*) Men like all of us make this country (Harmony 2001: 28).

In this speech, Creon represents his household's affairs as a microcosm of the *polis* he rules. A lack of order in the former begets a destructive disorder in the latter. Like Sophocles' Creon, Marcos believes that making concessions in his treatment of the pueblerinos will lead to a dissolution of the established order. Like his ancient predecessor, Marcos also fails to realize that his ideological rigidity will eventually lead to loss and tragedy.¹⁸⁰ When Cristina eventually decides to transgress the established boundaries, she provokes the enmity of her uncle and establishes herself as his ideological foil. It is the crossing of the aforementioned boundaries that will cost Cristina her associations. Their rigidity and oppressive force have already cost Lorenzo his life and will lead to the eventual burst of revolution.

There is an obvious imbalance of power predicated upon the social status of participants in the adaptation's conveyed society. Class and ethnicity intersect to marginalize an entire community, and gender is presented as an additional determinant for agency and privilege. The issues presented in this first scene will see themselves thoroughly explored throughout Harmony's adaptation. In order to best navigate these issues in an intelligible manner, I believe it is most useful to use Cristina as an anchor to ground the rest of this analysis. At the end of Scene I, Cristina is left in a state of uncertainty. She has begun to question her position as it relates to the world around her, but she does not yet have the information which will allow her to develop a discernable ideological stance. As the play continues, Cristina's position will become defined and cemented. Her progression will cause her to lose most of her social privileges and connections but will serve to highlight longstanding abuses and the societal problems that lead to their continuance.

¹⁸⁰ Apfel 2011. In her chapter *Antigone and Electra: Moral Conflict*, Lauren Apfel examines the incompatible positions of Creon and Antigone in Sophocles' text. Apfel notes that it is the characters' monist commitment to their positions and their overapplication of their own rules that leads to loss and pain. In this regard, Marcos is most like Creon. His inflexibility regarding boundaries will ultimately cause him tremendous loss and suffering.

In the rest of this analysis, I will analyze key scenes of Harmony's adaptation guided by Cristina's detachment from each of the major pillars upholding her life. As we observe Cristina's progression, we will continue to discern the presence of Sophocles' *Antigone* and the anxieties and disillusionments surrounding the concept of revolution and its aftermath.

Cristina's Awakening – Understanding Social Divisions

Harmony's treatment of Cristina affords us the opportunity to witness something that is largely absent from its Sophoclean model. We see Cristina before her ideological stance is fully formed and are thus witness to its fundamentals. In Cristina's case, the drive of her fervor is born from the almost malicious apathy she perceives from those of her social class. Class and ethnicity intersect to marginalize an entire community (the people of the pueblo), and gender is presented as an additional determinant for agency and privilege.¹⁸¹ As Cristina attempts to understand the causes of social division and disparity, her responses to injustice grow increasingly sharper. As we will see, Cristina's awakening to the injustices perpetrated around her and by her people will lead her to disavow those of her class and disengage from her established community. To do so, Cristina's first task is to understand the dynamics of class and class-based distinctions as they operate in the society she inhabits.

Class-based distinction is pervasive in Harmony's play, and it is deeply entangled with notions of ethnic identity. As the play progresses, we bear witness to conversations and

¹⁸¹ By intersectionality, I refer to the restrictions and privileges imposed by the established order and the manner in which they affect different characters to varying degrees in accordance with their social standing. This is to say, the challenges and repressions experienced by Cristina, for example, will not be identical to those faced by Nana or by the women of the pueblo. Though the women all share a perceived gender identity, their social history and economic standing enforce a distinct set of privilege and oppression upon them. Acknowledging the intersectional character of these social stratifications while analyzing their individual components will help us better understand the scope of these oppressions and the magnitude of their restrictive force. My use of the language of intersectionality is indebted to the work of Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw (1989). In this chapter, I turn to this language of intersectionality to better understand the extent to which the disadvantaging factors predicated on gender, class, and ethnicity in this adaptation combine to oppress people in accordance with the combination of their identities and group memberships. For a short overview of intersectional analysis and related concepts, see Delgado & Stefancic 2017.

situational juxtapositions that reveal the disconnect between ‘upper’ and ‘lower’ class perspectives. Following Cristina’s first conversation with Marcos, analyzed above, Harmony presents us with two scenes which show Cristina’s discomfort with the surrounding circumstances. The first, in which Cristina is joined by a group of young women who wish to assist her with wedding preparations, shows the class disparity afflicting comparable groups of women with differing social status. The scene’s importance comes from its outlining of communal identities and its showcasing of Cristina’s emerging reluctance to continue abiding by its delineations.

In setting this scene, Harmony’s text refers to the group of Cristina’s friends as ‘*El coro de señoritas decentes*’, or the chorus of proper young ladies.¹⁸² This scene depicts the group of young women sharing marital and sexual fantasies. Their time together is interrupted by a group of pueblerinas who seek to plead with Marcos so he might allow the return of their men and Lorenzo’s burial. The young women’s reaction to this group of pueblo women is telling of the social chasm that exists between the two groups. Upon hearing the voices of the women pleading with Marcos from outside, the ‘proper ladies’ respond as follows:

SEÑORITAS – ¿Qué es eso? ¿Es que las doncellas no pueden reunirse sin ver alteradas sus tardes pacíficas? ¿Qué voces desconocidas vienen a sobresaltarnos? (Harmony 2001: 11).¹⁸³

LADIES – What is that? Cannot maidens gather without having their peaceful afternoons disrupted? What unknown voices come to disturb us?

¹⁸² Harmony 2001: 10. ‘*Señoritas decentes*’ literally translates to decent young ladies, but the phrase’s meaning is better equated to something like ‘proper young ladies’ in idiomatic English. The term ‘señorita’ simply refers to an unwedded woman. Given the historical conceit of the play and the scene’s focus on curiosity and burgeoning sexuality, the word is also meant to reflect ideas of innocence and chastity. For Cristina, this scene and this language also set up a future denied.

When the young women discover the source of the voices, this exchange follows between the women present inside.

SEÑORITAS – ¿Quién les dio permiso de llegar hasta aquí?

NANA – Nadie les dio permiso. Nadie les da nada.

CRISTINA – Más bien se lo quitan (Harmony 2001: 11).

LADIES – Who gave them permission to come this far?

NANA – No one gave them permission. No one gives them anything.

CRISTINA – Rather they take from them.

This disdainful reaction from the ‘proper ladies’ is indicative of the divide between the women of the pueblo (pueblerinas) and those of Cristina’s class. Within the broader context of this scene, the pueblerinas’ pleas sharply contrast with the child-like fantasies of the young women. The violent realities of scarcity and oppression disallow the pueblerinas from experiencing the playful nature exhibited by the young aristocrats as even this has been taken from them. The ‘proper ladies’ ludically wish to discover the pleasures of sexuality. The women of the pueblo speak in anguish as they seek safety for their men and burial for Lorenzo. Though the two populations would be relatively analogous in matters of age and gender, their class and ethnicity combine to enforce their social realities. In their plea to Marcos, the women of the pueblo attempt to appeal to his sense of decency and emotions. The women express doubt in the power of their rhetoric and cite self-awareness of their social status as the reason for this doubt.¹⁸³ The immediate dismissal from a comparable group, the ‘proper ladies’, confirms the validity of their doubt and alludes to a possible thematic interpretation of Harmony’s full project: change without baseline human valuation is impossible.

¹⁸³ The word ‘doncella’ is best represented by the English ‘maiden’. Both terms are rather antiquated and carry connotations of youth, chastity and, in many cases, upper class standing.

¹⁸⁴ Harmony 2001: 12.

Further accentuating the social differences foregrounded in this scene, the chorus of proper ladies bears witness to the ongoing events from inside while the pueblo women are only heard. The pueblerinas are left to plead from the outside. As the proper ladies also rely on the physical boundaries of the estate for social and ethical guidance, they immediately question the propriety of the pueblo women's presence. There is a deployment of the language of legality in the ladies' use of 'permission' that is highly reminiscent of Isabel's earlier remarks denouncing the pueblo men's actions as theft and Marcos' language of legality as used in the service of preserving socioeconomic distinctions. The repeated use of such legalistic language will continue to do much characterization work throughout this adaptation. It acts as a marker for self-determination and social distinction for those of the upper class and supplies them with an apparent rationale for supporting the establishment and its continued abuses. It is easy to disregard the suffering of others when their presence and existence is devalued in terms of legality and morality. As a result of this model, the ladies' strict adherence to social and physical demarcations leaves no room for empathy, even for a relatively analogous population. The character placement of this scene reinforces the insider and outsider household dynamic noted above. These dynamics further serve to isolate Cristina, who here begins to display a budding understanding of the social realities that surround her. Her reaction to the women is markedly different when compared to that of her friends. When the young women attempt to sway her to return to her wedding preparations, Cristina is noticeably shaken. In shifting the register of the passage's language from one of giving to that of taking, Cristina demonstrates that she is starting to notice the pervasiveness of inequality in her environment. The scene ends with her silently questioning the propriety of her wedding planning amidst this environment of suffering and unrest. A fissure begins to manifest in Cristina's sense of community and belonging. A couple of

scenes later, we bear witness to what is likely the most striking display of the play's stratifications and their intersectional character. The social distinctions and disparities operating throughout the play and briefly modeled in this scene are put on gruesome display in a manner that provides a contextualizing backdrop to Cristina's desire to break with her community.

Scene four, titled '*Progress*', sees the *coros de mujeres y de señores serios*, or 'choruses of women and serious gentlemen' offer contrasting narratives of their socioeconomic realities.¹⁸⁵ This choral exercise gives us a condensed instantiation of the abuses perpetrated by the upper class and the corresponding oppressions experienced by those outside its rigid boundaries. The entire scene mirrors the rapid-fire fervor of *stichomythia*. However, the two choruses do not appear to be replying to each other and are instead absorbed in presenting their own reality. As such, it is possible to read each chorus' account as an independent narrative. If we choose to read them as presented, however, we find that the two narratives take turns counteracting one another. As the two accounts develop, thematically linked sections become antithetical when read together. For instance, the men's claims of economic progress are undercut by the women's descriptions of the violence and oppression that enabled them. Narratives of suffering are counteracted with claims of national success and abundance. This scene implicates differences of gender, class, and ethnicity in its depiction of social stratification. Though the entirety of the scene is worthy of analysis, I bring our attention to a couple of its most striking lines.

In the excerpt below, we see the chorus of men presenting a narrative of progress focused on economic prosperity and Eurocentric emulation. At the same time, the suffering women offer a contrasting account of extreme scarcity and death.

¹⁸⁵ Harmony 2001: 15.

SEÑORES – Se construye por todas partes. Tenemos bellas casas francesas y campos fértiles y ganado
MUJERES – Un poco de tortilla, un poco de frijol, algo que dar a nuestros niños. Leche, nunca tenemos...
SEÑORES – Bebemos vinos importados y ya sabemos de cocina internacional. Nuestros hijos van a los mejores colegios; aprenden a hablar otros idiomas.
MUJERES – Los niños se nos mueren tiernitos. Apenas logramos criarlos.
SEÑORES – Esto está muy bien. Nadie tiene porqué quejarse (Harmony 2001: 15).

GENTLEMEN – There is construction everywhere. We have beautiful French homes and fertile fields and livestock.
WOMEN – A bit of tortilla, a small amount of beans, something to give to our children. Milk, we never have...
GENTLEMEN – We drink imported wines, and we now know about international cooking. Our children go to the best schools; they learn to speak other languages.
WOMEN – Our children die young and tender. We hardly manage to raise them.
GENTLEMEN – This is all excellent. No one has reason to complain.

The formal structure of this choral passage adopts some elements commonly found in stichomythia, namely the alternating lines and the use of antithesis. Nevertheless, it also differs in that there is no metrical complement to be found, and the choruses do not actually seem to be in dialogue with one another. In his analysis of stichomythia in Sophocles, Simon Goldhill argues that the collapse of stichomythia into fragmented miscommunications forms part of the ethical questions of tragedy.¹⁸⁶ Similarly, the perverse thematic mirroring and disconnect between the two choruses in Harmony's play foreground the play's ethical concerns. This scene stages the relationship between socioeconomic progress and abusive exploitation. The alternating lines are presented by groups that are likely not occupying the same space and time. Though the two groups and their fates are inextricably linked, their disjointed narratives and the men's inability to even acknowledge the women's suffering (let alone establish any form of communication) highlights the degree and pervasiveness of inequality.

In creating a specific characterization for the choruses behind these alternating narratives, Harmony succinctly displays her adaptation's intersectional dynamics. Representing the most marginalized of the play's populations, the women of the chorus embody the suffering caused by an accumulation of oppressions and abuses.¹⁸⁷ The harsh realities described by Nana in the beginning of the play are here given a firsthand account. The theft of land, the exploitation of labor, the lack of opportunities for social advancement, and the apathy shown towards continued scarcity and death are all represented in the narrative given by the women. Of special import in this passage is the concern over food. Where the women seek to feed others in their narrative, the men seem to be concerned with what they can consume. Though a small detail, this is representative of the scene at large. Taken in its entirety, the scene tells us that the women suffer from extreme economic scarcity, hunger, death, and sickness. Additionally, they have no access to education, employment, or any prospects for social mobility. In contrast, the characterization of the male chorus presents us with the epitome of privilege. Throughout the scene, the men speak of economic successes, ownership, economic abundance, and the fundamental components for upward social mobility. Their words also reveal an additional layer that further problematizes the adaptation's already complex social dynamics.

In their narrative of progress, the men endeavor to create a decidedly 'Western' and globalized self-image to advance their claims to progress.¹⁸⁸ They live in French houses,

¹⁸⁶ Goldhill 2012.

¹⁸⁷ Harmony's play has already shown that women, regardless of social standing, are not heard. The women depicted in the chorus face additional oppression by virtue of being indigenous and poor. In detailing their sufferings, Harmony displays the reality of her adaptation's most marginalized group.

¹⁸⁸ Mexico has a history of looking elsewhere when establishing markers of social and economic progress. Classical European and 'Western' ideas and products have often been emulated or adopted in an attempt to project a more worldly or sophisticated image. See Goldberg 2009, which observes that Latin American racism is largely contingent on 'euro-mimesis', whereby the structural properties of whiteness are favored, and it is possible to 'elevate' oneself to whiteness by taking on the properties of whiteness (Euro-centric education, religion, moral values, etc.). For a relevant historical example, the pre-revolutionary period established as this adaptation's setting saw Mexico's president, Porfirio Díaz, furnish the capital with fountain statues of classical

know international cooking, and drink imported wines. This association is a subtle but powerful signifier of privilege and its association to ethnicity. A scene later, when Ignacio meets with his father per Cristina's request, these more subtle ethnic markers are made explicit as Marcos refers to the people of the pueblo as 'indios', a word which evokes a sense of ethnic prejudice which feeds into the play's racial hierarchies. Briefly visiting this textual moment will better contextualize the image of social and ethnic difference present in the scene here analyzed.

When Ignacio asks to learn of the events which unfolded in his absence, that is to say the death of Lorenzo and the current status of the estate, Marcos says the following:

MARCOS: No te inquietes; unos cuantos líos con los indios, pero siempre hemos tenido problemas con ellos (Harmony 2001: 17).

MARCOS: Do not worry; a few issues with the Indians, but we have always had problems with them.

This brief response is likely the adaptation's most linguistically explicit moment of ethnic othering. After aligning himself with Euro-centric markers of privilege and progress, Marcos describes the people from the pueblo with a signifier that unambiguously precludes them from his same status on the basis of ethnic identity.¹⁸⁹ The term 'indio' has a long and complicated history in Mexico and Latin America. Marcos is almost assuredly using the term in a disparaging matter. He is invoking the exclusionary and 'othering' properties of

Roman mythology. This was done with the intent of putting Mexico City on par with other world capitals, regardless of the tenuous connection between the city's population and the mythological content depicted. See Vilasana and Gómez 2017.

¹⁸⁹ Ramírez Zavala 2011 gives a short survey of the term 'indio' and its history. The article examines the shifting definition of the term from its colonial beginnings to its use as a descriptor for populations that differ from the predominant culture. For a relevant recent assessment of the mechanisms of racism and whiteness in Mexico, see Moreno Figueroa 2010.

the word. His citing of long-term and ongoing conflict adds to the accumulating evidence of generational exploitation and oppression.

Returning to the choral exchange between the women and the serious gentlemen, we witness the following contrasting lines as the scene reaches its climax:

MUJERES – Queremos vivir. No Soportamos que este valle de lágrimas se presente tan largo, tan ancho, tan inacabable.

SEÑORES – Los negocios marchan viento en popa y no puede ser menos porque...

MUJERES – Un camino que nos lleva a ninguna parte, sembrado de cruces, un enorme cementerio...

SEÑORES – La iniciativa privada es el brazo derecho en el adelanto de la patria. Siempre lo ha sido.

MUJERES – ¿Por qué nos quitan el último pedazo de pan y mandan a la tropa a disparar contra nosotros? (Harmony 2001: 15).

WOMEN – We want to live. We cannot bear that this valley of tears appears so long, so wide, so unending.

GENTLEMEN – Business is going swimmingly, and it can be no other way because...

WOMEN – A road that leads us nowhere, sown with crosses, an enormous cemetery...

GENTLEMEN – Private industry/initiative is the right arm of the country's progress. It always has been.

WOMEN – Why do they take from us the last piece of bread and send the troops to fire upon us?

The class divide manifested in this choral exchange culminates in this final instantiation of social imbalance. As the men gloat about their economic success and its effect on national progress in a display of capitalistic excess, the women directly indict them as responsible for their suffering. Not satisfied with causing the women's misery and limiting their options, the men and the forces they represent have taken the scarce sustenance available to the chorus of women, which is metonymic for dispossessed womankind. The men have completely destroyed the livelihood of the pueblerinos for their own prosperity in the name of progress. The women see no hope of escaping the dire situation forced upon them by these abuses. It

is important to reiterate that in this scene, the plight of the indigenous people is channeled through the voices of women. The fact that the indigenous voice is feminized in a play where women are overtly ignored casts an especially pessimistic shadow on the play's conclusion and interpretative possibilities.

The somewhat abstracted and general presentation of class constructs exhibited in this scene are grounded and made intelligible to the play's narrative context in the scene's final moments. Marcos himself joins the chorus of serious gentlemen and confirms that the dynamic we have witnessed is applicable to his estate and likely even intensified therein. Furthermore, he demonstrates the imbalance of power and its arbitrary nature as described in previous moments of this play. Upon joining the chorus, Marcos replies directly to the women's final question. The entire passage sees various forces coalesce in upholding the established order. It reads as follows:

MARCOS – The soldiers fired in accordance with the law. If a man happened to die, those responsible are the men who invaded my land and who are now fleeing.

GENTLEMEN – (*Reading again.*) How? What is this? (One by one.) Did you see? The leader of a group of bandits fled after inciting some ignorant field workers to take possession of land that does not belong to them.

WOMEN – Lorenzo lies dead, abandoned in a field where we are not allowed to enter.

MARCOS – As long as those responsible for this disorder refuse to appear, the corpse will remain unburied, exposed to the vultures.

Enter the Priest, he stands beside Don Marcos.

WOMEN – Mister Priest, do not allow Lorenzo's corpse to remain without a Christian burial.

PRIEST – The church cannot intervene against the established order.

GENTLEMEN – (*They use the newspaper as a threatening weapon.*) A firm hand, an iron fist against the bandits, the insurgents, the enemies of progress.

MARCOS – If the pueblo wants to see its dead buried, let it reveal Francisco's hiding place.

MUJERES – Have mercy for our sake, the mother, Lorenzo's pregnant wife (Harmony 2001: 15).

Again, the language of legalism is used to exonerate the upper class of its abuses and to put the onus of oppression and suffering on those most afflicted by it. This exchange gives some credence to the words spoken by Marcos earlier in the play. The feeling of responsibility he cites in order to justify his prohibiting of Lorenzo's burial to the sisters (Act I, Scene I) seems to be shared by the chorus of gentlemen, who appear to be troubled by the news of the events surrounding Lorenzo and his death. The use of legalistic language and the characterization of the men as bandits and ignorant field workers is yet another example of linguistic othering applied in service of preserving the status quo. The chorus of men conceives of the pueblerinos as outliers and obstacles to the image of unabated progress they have crafted throughout the scene. Their language mirrors words previously spoken by Marcos, but their equating of the men's actions to theft most closely parallels Isabel's interpretation of the events as demonstrated in Scene I.

Implicit in the scene's ending is the extent of the men's ideology and its reach among the powerful upper class. The one sided and violent application of the law in favor of preserving the established powers at the very least signals complacency at the hands of the state in its backing of the estate holders. The state itself is complicit in the narrative presented by Marcos and the gentlemen's chorus. After all, the troop sent to guard Marcos' estate was sent by the very state at his behest. Furthermore, the fact that the events of Marcos' estate are read in a newspaper and interpreted equally by the estate holders suggests that the newspaper has likewise framed the events in a manner that coincides with the upper class's perspective. They are outraged at the events, not at its presentation. This fact seems to implicate the media as an instrument of the upper class. The final character to join this scene, the priest, dismisses the women's pleas and remarks on the church's inability to defy the established order. His advising of resignation preserves the status quo explicitly and

makes him complicit in the dynamics here examined. Notably, he is described as standing beside Marcos as if supporting his position. The priest and religion will be instrumental to Cristina's ideological journey and will be analyzed in more detail below. The choral mode of this scene allows these different entities, Marcos, the estate holders, the state itself, the media, and the church to be construed of as a unified party. All members seek to preserve the current state of affairs, and all actively participate in the oppression and exploitation of the working class. The culmination of this scene sees the men of the pueblo demonized and criminalized for seeking to improve their livelihoods and the women of the pueblo ignored and suppressed by men in power. The thematic core of the play is presented in this scene in a short but powerful narrative.

This scene presents us with an image of the dread and desperation that will lead the men of the pueblo to revolution while it simultaneously foregrounds the continued suppression and apathy aimed towards the voices of women, a dynamic that will be especially relevant for the play's conclusion. This choral scene serves to demonstrate the magnitude of the socioeconomic chasm affecting privilege and prosperity in the play's world. It shows the audience the extent of the upper class's prosperity and the depths of the pueblo's misery as caused by the extreme inequalities upholding the current state of affairs. The marked capitalist underpinnings exhibited in this scene evoke the ideas surrounding the Mexican Revolution's mythical narrative. Furthermore, the forces acting in support of the status quo will serve as negative examples deployed to critique the society denounced by Harmony in her contemporaneity, a line of interpretation that I will revisit by the conclusion of this chapter.

Many of the injustices and disparities exhibited in this scene will be further examined in a later exchange between Cristina and Marcos. Said exchange will mark the

moment in which Cristina finally solidifies her stance and steps more firmly into the shoes of Antigone. Before this occurs, however, it is necessary for Cristina to become fully aware of the same social inequality we have witnessed as a result of this scene. Cristina's journey to establishing an ideological stance will take her beyond simply understanding the demarcations of social difference and into casting her lot with the people of the pueblo.

We have already seen the beginning of Cristina's journey. Her conversations with Nana, Isabel, and the proper ladies have shown that she has begun to question her own status as compared to the sufferings of those around her. However, she has yet to fully understand her own role in the established system and the true extent of the suffering perpetrated by her social class. Cristina gains this awareness, to a more actionable extent, when challenged by a group of women from the pueblo in Act I, Scene VI. Cristina and Nana are confronted by a group of women from the pueblo. The group of pueblerinas express their hatred towards Cristina in unambiguous terms stating that they hate her for what she possesses in excess and without merit. The relevant passage reads as follows:

WOMEN – We are your enemies.

NANA – No, that is not possible. She is a good and sweet child, who is not even capable of recognizing hate.

WOMEN – Because she has never had the need to feel it. Because she has grown surrounded by safety and care. Because she came into life as if it were a party. Because she does not know hunger, nor a cold bedding, nor the need to give thanks for a piece of hard tortilla. Ah! That damned thanking and smiling for everything: 'Yes, sir. Thank you, ma'am'.

CRISTINA – You hate me for what I have given you?

WOMEN – We hate you for what you have and have received without deserving it, without working, without even having to be thankful (Harmony 2001: 20).

The women force Cristina to confront the unfiltered reality of oppression by highlighting the obscene disparity of their socioeconomic status. In explaining their hatred, the women describe it as an emotion born from emptiness. According to them, their hatred is born as the

product of despair and hunger, the product of having nothing and even then, having things taken from you. Their hatred is, to some extent, presented in terms of property. Cristina becomes a target for this hatred as a symbol of the system and its unjust disparity. She possesses much simply by the circumstances of her birth. Nana and Cristina attempt to diminish the legitimacy of these claims to hatred and to remove Cristina from the role of oppressor. Nana describes Cristina as a child and attempts to downplay culpability in exploiting the pueblo. Nana then asks the following question of the women:

NANA – ¿Hasta dónde se puede decir quién es víctima y quién es victimario?

NANA – To what extent can one really say who is a victim and who is an abuser?

The women quickly reply,

MUJERES – Hasta donde se puede decir; éste tiene y éste no (Harmony 2001: 20).

WOMEN – To the extent where we can say, this one has and this one does not.

When Nana attempts to obfuscate the roles of victim and oppressor, the women simply point to the obvious disparity in their stations. We must remember that Nana, who questions these roles, is complicit in upholding the current system due to her vested interests. The women's discussion of possession here acts as a powerful ethical marker, especially if read in conjunction with what has been established in Scene IV, namely the suffering of the pueblo in contrast to the extravagant wealth of the estate holders. From the perspective of the thoroughly dispossessed, the women who have seen their livelihoods taken and their labor exploited, possession signals the profit extracted and achieved through a system of abuse and oppression. It is a physical representation of inequality that marks the extent of the injustices committed against them. As a response, Cristina will attempt to argue for an

equality in childhood, claiming that she loved Lorenzo and Francisco as brothers in their youth. The women point out that this love did not persist beyond childhood and speak the following words:

MUJERES: Entonces no recordemos la infancia, cuando nada de común nos ha dejado (Harmony 2001: 20).

WOMEN – Then let us not remember childhood, since it has left us nothing in common.

Memory once again emerges as thematically important in this exchange. We have already experienced an attempt at suppressing memory in the play's first scene in relation to Nana. In a similar manner, the pueblerinas here dismiss the importance of remembering given that the past cannot alleviate the pain of the present. This is especially important if we interpret Harmony's play as a commentary on mythmaking and historical narratives. Considering Mexico's revolutionary narrative, we can see that appeals to memory serve to create the illusion of unified national and ethnic identity. As Mexico's narrative of national unity and racial homogenization prevails, disparity caused by racial and ethnic oppressions is overlooked or dismissed as fictitious.¹⁹⁰ The women's rejection of memory and shared origins counteracts Cristina's claims to unity and shared struggle on the basis of incomparable socioeconomic realities. Like Cristina's appeals to childhood, the myth of the revolution and its appeals to a unified people and struggle are useless when the realities of oppression are not rectified. The extreme disparity between Cristina and the pueblerinas

¹⁹⁰ See Goldberg 2009 esp. 200-234, which argues that *mestizaje*, the notion that some Latin American countries transcend beyond racial discourse due to a shared national and ethnic identity, only reinscribes social denigrations, denials, erasures, and derogations on the basis of race. For Goldberg, *mestizaje* is intimately linked to euro-mimesis and privileges whiteness and aspirations towards whiteness. José Vasconcelos champions this idea of racial unification transcendence in *La Raza Cósmica*, an influential document for the formation of an intellectualized Mexican national identity after the revolution.

culminates in the language of hatred presented in the above passage and in the following passage,

CRISTINA – (*Curious.*) What does it feel like to hate?

WOMEN – We will attempt to explain it to you, even though we are ignorant women. Would you understand, perhaps, if we told you about despair and hunger? If we told you that hate is born when you have nothing left, because you have only ever had one thing, a little thing, at some point and even that has been lost? Would you be capable of understanding?

CRISTINA – I would try.

WOMEN – Well then try to hate us. We are the cruelest threat to your happiness, the cloud that looms over the stupid satisfaction with which you say, ‘yours and mine’ (Harmony 2001: 20).

The women’s dismissal and their rhetoric of hate and despair seem to shock Cristina. She claims to not understand hatred as an emotion. In their censure of Cristina, the women use the language of hatred to shatter any delusions she may have had about herself and her relationship to the people of the pueblo. Their self-characterization as ignorant women reveals their awareness of the upper class’s portrayal of their people.¹⁹¹ However, the same descriptor used in a conversation in which Cristina is unaware of the realities they face and her implicit guilt therein reveals that Cristina is truly the ignorant one in this exchange. There is a heavy sense of sarcasm in the women’s words. Cristina is unambiguously an oppressor in their view. Their worlds are too different. Any argument Cristina attempts to raise as a rebuttal is immediately undercut by the women who simply point at the gravity of their situation.¹⁹² The women’s hatred is alienating to Cristina. It further foregrounds the extreme inequality stemming from Marcos’ estate. It also acts as an especially important precursor to Cristina’s eventual confrontation with Marcos.

¹⁹¹ Marcos refers to Nana as an ignorant woman in Scene I, and the chorus of estate holders refers to the men of the pueblo as ignorant field workers in Scene IV.

¹⁹² Marcos 2005 points out the manner in which feminist discourse in Mexico, and in particular urban feminist discourse, has often enabled and encouraged hegemonic relations which cast indigenous feminism as ‘other’ and further marginalized the classes it represents.

The scenes analyzed thus far demonstrate the play's interest in examining social and ethnic divisions. We have seen how the stratifications upheld by the current state of affairs creates disparity along arbitrary lines. Analogous populations like the women of the pueblo and the proper ladies experience vastly different realities, concerns, and privileges. The most powerful group, the chorus of estate holders, is set in contrast to the most vulnerable, the chorus of pueblerinas, and their living conditions are put on display. Along with Cristina, we learn of the hierarchical nature of privilege as applied in the societies she inhabits. Though she forms part of the upper class, she is constantly reminded of her status as a woman and has her mobility and agency limited accordingly. These ideas will continue to be examined as the play progresses. For the moment, I turn our attention to Cristina and the first steps she takes towards resistance.

Antagonizing and Antagonizing Cristina - Adopting an Ideological Position

Before her full confrontation with Marcos, Cristina exhibits the desire to genuinely understand the plight of the people of the pueblo and to act for their benefit in some way. Before her meeting with the women from the pueblo, she does not quite seem to understand the depths of the disparity and abuses upholding her lifestyle and the estate. Her initial attempts at action see her seeking the assistance of her fiancé Ignacio, as she believes that his intervention may sway Marcos in a way that is inaccessible to her. Cristina asks Ignacio to speak to Marcos about the ongoing abuses and the plight of the pueblerinos. This step marks the first instance in which Cristina's dissatisfaction with the status quo slowly begins to morph into a more actionable resistance. In contrast to the first two scenes, it is here that

Cristina's resolve begins to take shape.¹⁹³ She appears to be forming ideals that she wishes to uphold regardless of personal cost. Upon laying out her requests to Ignacio, namely that in addition to speaking to Marcos he will be completely honest with her, listen to her thoughts, and that they will 'think the same', Cristina asks the following:

CRISTINA – ¿Crees que podemos celebrar una boda como si nada, y ser felices, mientras están pasando las cosas que pasan? (Harmony 2001: 14).

CRISTINA – Do you think we can celebrate a wedding as if nothing were wrong and be happy, while all of these things are happening?

In this moment Cristina has verbalized a link that will hold ramifications for the rest of the adaptation. From this point forward, Cristina sets her prospects of happiness and prosperity in opposition to the continuance of the status quo. In doing so, Cristina has, to some extent, linked her happiness to the fates of the pueblerinos and to the dissolution of the systems that have caused their prolonged misery. The immediate effect of this link, and Cristina's first venture towards taking a stand, is that of stopping her wedding preparations. Though this action is more akin to refusal than opposition, a far cry from the zealous actions and stands taken by other Antigones, it is nevertheless a first step towards resistance for a rather peculiar Antigone referent.¹⁹⁴ In refusing to continue with wedding preparations, Cristina

¹⁹³ In the first scene, Cristina ends up accepting her uncle's gift and returning to her wedding preparations despite their brief confrontation. In the second, Cristina seems perturbed by the pueblerinas' plight but does and says nothing of substance. See Harmony 2001: 10 & 12 respectively.

¹⁹⁴ Honig 2021 offers a reading of Euripides' *Bacchae* (and other important literary works and agents) that sees refusal as resistance's plausible first step towards transformative action and collective feminist self-governance. Honig's analysis of refusal could help us contextualize some of Cristina's early actions. The suspension of her wedding preparations is the most likely candidate for this framework. Examined through this lens, Cristina's refusal to celebrate a wedding could be intended to pressure those around her into enacting change. Cristina's absence from church and social gatherings could be read as acts of refusal if interpreted generously. However, doing so is risky given that Cristina's confinement would likely make this more like imposed constraints than willful actions (or inactions). Whatever the case, Cristina's refusal is minded towards solidarity with a collective, an act that differs from the solitary and pointed actions of many other Antigone figures. Though I believe Honig's framework can help us look at Cristina's early actions in a productive manner, I see potential problems with a full deployment of refusal theory for this adaptation. Most importantly, refusal's drive towards transformative action would be undercut by the hopelessness of the play's ending.

succeeds in convincing Ignacio to speak with his father. Though the meeting will not yield the results Cristina and Ignacio wish for, it will serve to further demarcate the ideological divide which will see Cristina and Ignacio standing at odds with Marcos and his estate.

The full ideological opposition between Cristina and Marcos comes after Cristina's run in with the women from the pueblo and occupies the second half of that same scene. The scene gathers Cristina, Marcos, Isabel, and Ignacio in a living room. Marcos is here characterized as angry and impatient, having lost his tolerance for Cristina's recent thoughts and words. We are not shown the things Cristina has been saying explicitly, but the general idea of her speech is revealed as the scene progresses. In what becomes a brusque confrontation between the two characters, Cristina slowly begins to attach the continuance of problems and abuses in her vicinity to the figure of Marcos. There is, in this scene, a dialogue of love and hate in which Cristina is forced to grapple with the fact that Marcos, in an amplification to the Sophoclean Creon, is a father figure as well as an ideological adversary. For Cristina, Marcos is a father more so than an uncle.¹⁹⁵ However, he also inhabits the role of a tyrant, given his status as a Creon-like figure. The following exchange sees Cristina speaking her newly adopted truth to her increasingly agitated uncle.

CRISTINA - ...los ricos lo somos a expensas de los pobres.

MARCOS - Acabas de descubrirlo.

CRISTINA - Si, acabo de descubrirlo.

MARCOS - ¿Y que harás con tu verdad tan nuevecita?

CRISTINA - Esperar que vaya madurando.

MARCOS - Y una vez que madure, sabrás que soy el tirano y dejarás que tu odio también crezca.

CRISTINA – Una vez que madure, será una verdad importante. Y si usted es el tirano, a usted habrá que detestarlo (Harmony 2001: 23).

Regardless of Cristina's actions and inactions, the mechanisms and stratifications explored in Harmony's adaptation suggest that divisions of gender, class, and ethnicity will be reinscribed in an oppressive and stratifying manner.

¹⁹⁵ The incestuous relationship between Cristina and Ignacio as cousins, would not have been considered incestuous within its historical context of early 20th Century Mexico (see Buunk & Massar 2020). Where a Sophoclean context might lead us to believe that incest is a cause for miasma, Harmony's play compels us to search more deeply for the true societal causes of suffering and injustice.

CRISTINA - ...those of us who are rich are rich at the expense of the poor.
MARCOS - You are only now discovering this[?]
CRISTINA - Yes, I just discovered this.
MARCOS - And what will you do with your oh-so-new little truth?
CRISTINA - I will wait for it to mature/develop.
MARCOS - And once it matures, you will know that I am the tyrant, and you will allow your hate to grow as well.
CRISTINA – Once it matures, it will be an important truth. And if you are the tyrant, it will be necessary to detest you.

This exchange marks the moment in which Cristina unambiguously adopts an ideological position. Emulating the earlier rhetoric used by the pueblo women, Cristina likewise uses the language of hatred to mark a clear distinction between herself and her uncle. After a series of episodes and conversations exhibiting her hesitation amidst discovering inequities, Cristina now realizes that the privilege and wealth of her class is inextricably linked to the oppression and exploitation of others. Though Cristina continues to be relatively soft in her approach to rebellion, this confrontation marks the moment in which Cristina more readily resembles Antigone. Marcos likewise receives a Creon-like characterization in this exchange. The dialogue between the two characters explicitly marks Marcos as a tyrant. Though he does so in a scolding tone and in an attempt to ridicule Cristina's ideas, he refers to himself as a tyrannical figure. Marcos is aware of his own conduct, its optics, and its impact on the people he exploits. This is true even if he justifies their condition with claims of progress and legality. This episode's language of hatred is used in conjunction with the language of tyranny. It serves to chip away at the familial bonds between the two characters at odds and makes way for Cristina's rejection of her community and the order they have come to represent and uphold.¹⁹⁶ Additionally, Cristina's word choices foreshadow what is

¹⁹⁶ Familial bonds are deemphasized and deprioritized throughout Harmony's work. Later in the play, a choral group of maidens praises Isabel for rejecting Cristina while citing that 'principles come before familial love' (Harmony 2001: 40). Though they speak this in affirmation of their allegiance to the establishment, these

in store for the two characters and can be seen as a callback to Sophocles' *Antigone*.¹⁹⁷

Taken as a willful adaptation of Sophocles, this passage comments on the temporality within its play while also looking back to the gender politics of the ancient tragedy and forward to those of contemporary Mexico. Taken in its totality, this scene cements the core positions that Marcos and Cristina will doggedly maintain as they advance towards tragedy.

Once Cristina unequivocally aligns herself with an ideological stance that is incompatible with that of Marcos, the play's awareness of gender and its stratifying power become all the more pronounced. We have already seen moments that explicitly show gender as it intersects with class and ethnicity to marginalize communities.¹⁹⁸ Furthermore, a few scenes in the adaptation have worked to remind us that women are expected to be apolitical and should not get involved in matters concerning men. It is important to reiterate that Harmony posits the notion that little has changed between the gender politics of the ancient Greek play and those staged in her production. The women who are accepting of this state of affairs mark themselves as apolitical and endeavor to draw Cristina into complacency.¹⁹⁹ Nana and Isabel both repeatedly tell Cristina that external matters ought to be handled by men. The 'proper ladies' likewise revel in the privilege afforded to them by complacency and conform to their expected roles. Harmony uses her characters and the repetition in their rhetoric to demonstrate that these ideas are deeply entrenched. When Harmony's adaptation reaches its second act, where Cristina's ideology has already been

words are thematically upheld throughout the entire play. Cristina will prioritize the liberation of the pueblerinos above her familial relations.

¹⁹⁷ Cristina's utterance also foreshadows the end of the tragedy. Brecht's alienation theory can be helpful for shifting our analytical lens by creating a critical distance from the ongoing action. A temporal distance compels us to look at this narrative in concert with its own posterity as well as its ancient Greek predecessor. Cristina's words offer a comment on the temporality within the play but also invite a transtemporal examination. See Féral and Bermingham 1987.

¹⁹⁸ The choral back-and-forth of Act I, Scene IV is likely the clearest example of gender being used as an element for marginalization and 'othering'.

established, Cristina's gender is foregrounded, and its constraints are enforced. The realities of gender will operate to constrain her physically, alienating her from her support system and limiting her potential for resistance.

Breaking with values – Concerns of the upper class

Act II of this adaptation details Cristina's isolation and loss as she continues to oppose the will of Marcos and the system he has come to represent in her eyes. The first scene gives us a glimpse of the world she will now work to abandon, Cristina does not appear in this episode, but the scene is nevertheless worth analyzing in detail due to its representations of social dynamics and desires among the upper class. It sees the joint return of the choruses of serious gentlemen and proper ladies. They are joined by Marcos and Isabel, who are attending a party sometime after Marcos' confrontation with Cristina. Taken in its entirety, this scene reinforces the gender expectations established in the first act. The scene is highly reminiscent of both choruses' previous appearances and largely serves the same purposes. It adopts the stichomythia-like rhythm of the previous choral exchange, but the accounts given by these two choruses act in unison instead of in opposition. The men will go on to speak of their property and the joys of ownership. The ladies do the same, although their characterization seems especially stereotypical, focusing more intently on their love of jewels, clothing, and luxury. An abridged version of the choral back and forth reads as follows:

GENTLEMEN – To ride on horseback across our territories is another great pleasure, early in the morning, when the day is just beginning. The horse gallops at a pace, obedient to the bridle that brakes its impatience, aware of its master. And then, to stop in some spot and glance over the vast fields which are covered by a fine fog. And to tell ourselves, 'this is all ours, everything belongs to us, thank the Lord'.

¹⁹⁹ Nana, Isabel, and the proper ladies all tell Cristina that external matters ought to be handled by men (Harmony 2001: 12). The 'proper ladies' seem to revel in the privilege afforded to them by complacency and conform to their expected roles, eventually alienating Cristina in the process.

LADIES – We pretend to marvel at nature, and we run to reproduce the landscape in a pretty watercolor that will hang from the living room wall. It is proof of exquisite sensibility, though deep down it is of little interest to us. What matters to us is visiting our wardrobe to look upon our dresses and say, ‘all of this is mine’.

GENTLEMEN – To enter our beautiful French living rooms, furnished with pieces of marquetry and the brightest crystals, and to think, ‘this is all mine’.

LADIES – To pick an inherited jewel, stored in a chest, waiting for us to want to showcase it, and to know, ‘it is mine.’

[...]

GENTLEMEN – To sit at an exquisite table and to eat as we please from the delicacies that would appear to overwhelm the table, as many and as delicious as they are. To praise God for his gifts and to ask in prayer for our bread, which is all mine.

[...]

GENTLEMEN – To collect works of art and to put them in a gallery accessed by only a few close acquaintances. To look upon the work of a master with the satisfaction of thinking, ‘it is mine’.

[...]

LADIES – To take a warm bath of sweet scents, assisted by our servants. To perfume our body with the aroma from bottles lined up in a vanity, the ones we care for with loving devotion, before the thought, ‘they are mine’.

GENTLEMEN – To say. ‘It is mine’.

LADIES – (*Scream.*) Mine. It is mine (Harmony 2001: 29-30).

Notably, there is a repeated emphasis with food in the men’s musings, which directly mirrors that of the dispossessed women of the pueblo. The language of meadows and nature is likewise worthy of note given that the women of the previous chorus described their life and landscape as an unending valley of tears.²⁰⁰ These images further highlight the disparity between the classes and foreground the moral failings that have led to its creation. The unhinged obsession with property substantiates the plight of the people of the pueblo. The anger, misery, and resentment expressed through the language of scarcity finds an antithetical image in the lavish descriptions of excess put forth by the wealthy.

The social stratifications born from gender are also evident in this scene and appear to dictate the conduct and expectations of its participants. It is clear that within the upper class, there is a hierarchy of privilege contingent upon gender categories. Harmony chooses

to characterize the women of the chorus as superficial and even malicious participants of the established system. Like the men, they are interested in ownership and in laying claim to property with little care for the human cost of their prosperity. However, the ‘proper ladies’ are deeply concerned with appearances and discuss feigning interest in the arts and nature. Such interests are portrayed as gendered prerequisite for enjoying their true pleasures, which in this scene are said to consist of domestic luxuries, jewels, and clothes. They discuss their feigned interests as ‘proof of exquisite sensitivity’, and immediately admit that it is of little genuine interest to them.²⁰¹ Though small, this is a valuable example of the gendered concessions the ladies are willing to make for the sake of advancing their privilege and prosperity. As the men express their admiration for pieces of art under their possession (mainly paintings), the ladies mirror and emulate the men’s interest as a sign of their good faith participation in upholding the current state of affairs.

This scene does little to advance the play’s larger narrative. However, it succeeds in marking the proper ladies as fully complicit in the dominant socioeconomic system and the abuses it perpetrates. The ladies’ willfully and skillfully participate in a system that they have learned to manipulate to their advantage. This reliance and celebration of the system are represented in Isabel’s remarks when she speaks to placate the ladies’ expressed fear of the pueblerinos and their actions in Marcos’ estate,

ISABEL - ¿Por qué temer? Si nuestros padres y parientes no parecen preocuparse, ¿hemos de hacerlo nosotras? Gocemos de la fiesta y la alegría ahora que somos jóvenes y estamos protegidas y resguardadas (Harmony 2001: 28).

ISABEL - Why fear? If our fathers and relatives do not seem to worry, ought we to worry? Let us enjoy the party and joy now that we are young and protected and guarded.

²⁰⁰ Harmony 2001: 15.

Isabel confirms and even champions the idea of male guardianship as it upholds her worry-free lifestyle.²⁰² Adhering to the status quo affords the ladies a set of privileges that ranks them immeasurably higher than potential analogous groups, i.e., the women from the pueblo. Though they are under the authority of the men in their social class, the women claim ownership to vast riches and privileges.²⁰³ To confirm their satisfaction and joint investment in the status quo, both choruses end their lines by presenting a claim to ownership as the greatest of all pleasures. Their final words are ‘Es mío’, or ‘It is mine’. Although spoken collectively, both choruses emphasize sole ownership. Their use of the singular ‘mine’ instead of ‘ours’ is deliberate and alludes to the self-centered nature of their desire. Knowing that their claims to ownership are contingent on the exploitation and displacement of others makes these remarks appear especially perverse. Wealth disparities have been presented in other scenes throughout the adaptation, but this particular scene sees upper-class men and women gather to express their pleasures and priorities in response to the anxiety caused by the situation surrounding Marcos’ estate. In short, this episode presents an image of the values championed by the upper class. These very values and the suffering they inflict will come to be directly rejected by Cristina as the adaptation reaches its conclusion. In denouncing and rejecting the pillars that uphold the status quo, Cristina

²⁰¹ Harmony 2001: 29.

²⁰² ‘Padres’ can be a general plural for parents in Spanish. However, I believe ‘fathers’ is a more appropriate translation in this case. Isabel’s orphan status, the absence of maternal presences throughout the play, and the fact that the chorus of men is presented as the guardians and gatekeepers of the status quo all indicate that Isabel is deliberately referring to male custodianship and not paternal guardianship.

²⁰³ In her brief overview of the history of Mexican feminism, Sylvia Marcos (1999) speaks of Mexican feminism as emerging in the 1970s. She notes that the early movement was spearheaded by middleclass women and did not account for women of other classes and ethnicities until much later. Most importantly, Sylvia Marcos notes that racism and ethnic discrimination has permeated every social strata of Mexican culture, including feminist movements. Sonia Mariscal (2014) likewise notes a tension with the political and private spheres of feminist thought and solidarity in Mexico and suggests that Mexican feminism was most contested in the home. Given the confinement of women to the home in Harmony’s adaptation, the women’s potential for resistance is especially constrained and solidarity beyond their immediate sphere is essentially disallowed. The ladies’ continued complacency and their refusal to sympathize with the suffering of the pueblerinas is a further indictment of the status quo and its stifling mechanisms.

first breaks ties with the church – a powerfully symbolic representation of community and the values ostensibly championed by those in power.

Breaking with faith – Pathologizing Cristina and depathologizing Antigone

As we move to the second scene of Act II, we witness the encroachment of the established system and the depths of its reach. We also see Cristina emerge as a more active adversary against the system and its defenders. Her resistance becomes progressively costlier as the adaptation heads into its conclusion. The attempts to remove her agency become increasingly pronounced. In the second scene of Act I, a priest visits Cristina at the request of Marcos. This is the same priest who earlier appeared beside Marcos when the women of the pueblo decried their condition. We will see that the two characters appear to operate in unison to uphold the current state of affairs and do so largely by virtue of their use of language. Whereas Marcos upholds and justifies the system with his application of legalistic language, the priest utilizes the language of faith and the divine to accomplish the same. Both characters speak of propriety in their attempts to reign in Cristina's behavior. Importantly, both characters attribute an element of madness or illness to Cristina that is responsible for her perceived deterioration and unacceptable conduct. As we will see, the recurring use of language attributing madness and illness shows a knowingness of its ancient predecessor and suggests a concern with its more detrimental interpretative possibilities.

The priest's discussion with Cristina is the play's most pointed application of the language of illness. It will quickly become apparent that the language of illness is deployed to silence dissent and to curb unacceptable deviations in behavior. This use of language is of special importance for an Antigone character and compels us to reexamine the figures of Cristina and Sophocles' Antigone in unison. Throughout the adaptation, the language of malady has repeatedly been used by other characters to describe Cristina or to explain away

her thoughts and behaviors.²⁰⁴ I believe it is worth briefly examining a few of these instances in order to understand Harmony's use of this language, its possible connection to the reception to Sophocles' *Antigone*, and the import of the two for the larger thematic project of Harmony's adaptation.

Cristina's very entrance on stage (the first action in the play) immediately marks her with the language of malady. The stage notes for her entrance read "entra Cristina. Parece enferma", or *enter Cristina, she seems ill/sick* (Harmony 2001: 6). This will not be the only instance in which Cristina's condition is brought into question. Later, when Ignacio notices a downtrodden Cristina in reaction to the events surrounding Lorenzo and the people of the pueblo, we witness the following exchange,

IGNACIO – Cristina, my love, you don't know how I have missed you! (*Cristina stands up, but she does not approach*). What is wrong with you? Why do you not run to embrace me? (*To Nana*). What's wrong? Is she sick?
NANA – I think so, Mr. Ignacio, hopefully you can cure her (Harmony 2001: 12).

This passage contains a couple of mechanics that will see themselves repeated as the play progresses. Though Cristina is not asked about her condition directly, Nana and Ignacio both assume she has fallen ill as soon as they sense a deviation from her expected character. This impulse to pathologize Cristina appears to be almost instinctive and speaks to the embedded cultural expectations at play in this adaptation. In response to Cristina's perceived ailment,

²⁰⁴ To recapitulate: the opening notes of the adaptation present Cristina with a sickly appearance (Harmony 2001: 6). Upon seeing Cristina's reaction to the events surrounding Lorenzo and the people of the pueblo, Ignacio asks if Cristina is ill. Nana responds that she is (Harmony 2001: 12). When Marcos becomes aggravated at Cristina's newfound convictions, Ignacio attempts to calm his anger by invoking the possibility of Cristina being afflicted by illness (Harmony 2001: 22). When Cristina does not show up to the party following her confrontation with Marcos, Isabel explains her absence to the proper ladies by claiming that Cristina is ill (Harmony 2001: 28).

Nana puts her hopes in Ignacio as a potential cure. She will repeat this behavior (banking on Ignacio's presence to cure Cristina) later in the play after Cristina is confined.²⁰⁵

Ignacio himself initially dismisses Cristina's conduct as caused by an illness. Though he will come to accept and adopt Cristina's convictions, thereby marking himself as her sole ally, he initially states the following in response to Marcos' growing impatience towards her new demeanor,

IGNACIO – Let her be, dad, let her calm down. I am afraid this would cause her more stress. What we ought to do is try to distract her a little.

MARCOS – (*Ironic.*) Have we not all tried to do just that? Have you, her boyfriend, not paid special attention to her? And how great are your results! At the slightest word she clenches her hands as if she were squeezing her blame out, or she responds with that absent air she has had for the last few days.

IGNACIO – What if she is sick, dad? Our duty is to help her, regardless of our love for her, because we are the only family she knows (Harmony 2001: 22).

Ignacio's seems to resort to the language of illness to excuse Cristina's behavior rather than dismiss it. Nevertheless, he reduces her agency in much the same manner as the rest of the people around her. Despite his best intentions, Ignacio also appears to subscribe to the notion that Cristina's deviation from the accepted social expectations and behaviors, as dictated by her class and gender, are a symptom of malady and should be treated as such. Isabel also adopts this line of thinking when speaking to the chorus of proper ladies in the first scene of Act II.

LADIES – You look stunning, Isabel, and your dress is beautiful! You will probably be the next bride. But tell us, update us, explain: why are your sister and her handsome fiancé not here?

ISABEL – Cristina is ill, and Ignacio did not wish to attend alone.

²⁰⁵ Nana expresses a sentiment that will once again be echoed by Marcos in a later scene. When he first speaks to Ignacio, Marcos also turns to Ignacio's presence as a cure for Cristina's odd behavior. He advises his son to marry Cristina quickly so she will forget her woes and misplaced sympathies.

CRISTINA – Oh how sad, an illness on the eve of their wedding! But let us hope it is a mild sickness and that next time we dance it is at that wedding.

ISABEL – I hope that as well.

LADIES – (*They surround Isabel.*) Is Cristina very ill?

ISABEL – A mild ailment.

LADIES – Bad enough to miss this party?

ISABEL – When you are sick, even if it is mild, you do not wish for parties.

LADIES – But this is the best of the season. Does she not want to dance with Ignacio? And was he so saddened that he did not show up even for a moment? We are sure that she is sicker than you are telling us, Isabel, even her boyfriend stayed back to care for her. And you are not worried?

ISABEL – I have already told you that Cristina is a bit indisposed, and that Ignacio does not wish to dance with anyone else (Harmony 2001: 22).

In excusing Cristina's absence to the chorus, Isabel speaks of Cristina as someone recuperating from an illness. At this point in the play, Cristina has been confined to her room by Marcos' orders. Cristina's behavior is too far removed from the norm, and so sharing details about her suffering and rebellion against the estate might prove embarrassing for the family given the social context. The ladies' persistent questioning accentuates the existence of strict behavioral expectations throughout an entire social class. Only illness could excuse Cristina's absence, and she would be absent only if struck by a serious affliction. Again, deviation from the established norms is interpreted as a result of physical or mental imbalance. The ladies' assumption that Ignacio is too sad to attend their party suggests a conflation of physical and mental illness that encompasses all which deviates from expected social behaviors.

The instances presented above suggest a notable correlation between illness and transgression. Behavior that is deemed unacceptable is conceptualized as an illness in a matter that removes responsibility and agency from the offending party, namely Cristina. In observing Harmony's pointed use of the language of illness, it is possible to link her adaptation to a specific interpretation of the ancient Greek tragedy.

Cristina is pathologized throughout the play in a manner that resonates strongly with a possible ancient interpretation of Sophocles' *Antigone*. By having staging notes and characters describe Cristina with the language of illness, Harmony homes in on a dynamic previously expressed in the Hippocratic treatise *Peri Parthenōn*, or *On the Diseases of Young Girls*. This treatise has a long and misogynist history of reception. It proposes that menstrual blood may pool in a young woman's body and attack her organs if the blood is unable to evacuate due to insufficient space. The pooling would presumably cause the afflicted woman to lose her senses, attract evil, be filled with terrors and madness, and experience an intense and irrational longing for death. The text prescribes marriage as a solution to this problem, suggesting that intercourse and childbirth would alleviate all symptoms.²⁰⁶ Helen King tracks the treatise's use in classical Greece as a contributor to the socioeconomic dynamic invested in funneling young women into the role of wife and mother as quickly as possible.²⁰⁷ King later tracks the use of this same treatise in the Renaissance, where the Hippocratic text is used to explain chlorosis as a disease of virgins.²⁰⁸ The Hippocratic text is a rough contemporary of Sophocles' *Antigone* and may have been circulating in a manner that influenced the play's early reception. Sophocles' *Antigone* is characterized as a young unmarried woman who exhibits what some could perceive as an unnatural fixation with death.

In Harmony's play, Cristina's growing cognizance of social inequality is inextricably linked to the progression of her supposed malady. It is largely through the language of sickness that the play's constraints of gender are deployed against Cristina. Reading with knowledge of this medical treatise and its connections to *Antigone* affords us the possibility of examining Harmony's play as an adaptation deeply immersed in and engaged with the

²⁰⁶ For the full Hippocratic text and its translation, see Flemming & Hanson 1998.

²⁰⁷ King 1985.

history of Sophocles' *Antigone*. Although there is no evidence of Harmony's awareness of this text, her use of the language of illness as a device for Antigone's characterization speaks to the entrenchment of this notion either as a cultural mainstay for enforcing gender roles or its prevalence in the practices of interpreting and reimagining *Antigone*. Harmony's text takes something that may have been present in the ancient tragedy and amplifies it in a manner that elevates and further complicates the ancient Antigone character. The continued use of illness as an external characterization sees Cristina become pathologized by the society and system she is opposing. Harmony's interest in using this language of illness does not end here, however, as it ultimately affords Cristina the space to depathologize herself and to oppose the interpretation of Antigone as a woman afflicted by a temporary madness. These issues are explored most directly in Cristina's conversation with the priest.

Cristina's meeting with the priest brings the language of illness to the forefront in a manner that illuminates the establishment's response to those who would deviate from their expected roles. As the meeting unfolds, we will see that Harmony's play is nihilistic in its conception of organized religion and condemns its participation in upholding an oppressive state of affairs. Upon greeting Cristina, the priest's first words have to do with Cristina's absence at church. Cristina speaks of being confined to her room, and the priest, who is unnamed, immediately speaks of her as a victim of malady. He says the following,

CURA - Me han dicho que estabas enferma, pero no me imaginé que fuera de cuidado (Harmony 2001: 30).

PRIEST - They have told me that you were sick, but I did not imagine it was so serious.

²⁰⁸ King 1998.

Cristina rebuffs this assertion. However, the priest endeavors to dismiss her honest claims of rebellion. At this point in the narrative, the priest uses the language of illness to diminish Cristina's actions and to explain her rebellion as a passing condition. The following exchange between the two characters best exemplifies this dynamic:

CRISTINA - No lo estoy, padre le han informado mal.

[...]

CURA - No creo a don Marcos capaz de mentirme. Él me rogó que viniera a verte.

CRISTINA - Mi tío no le mintió, solamente que está equivocado. Toma por enfermedad lo que no es otra cosa que franca rebeldía. ¿No se lo dijo, padre? ¿no le contó lo mal que me comporto y lo desgraciada que soy?

CURA - (*En un evidente apuro*) Me dijo que tus nervios están quebrantados.

CRISTINA - Tiene razón.

CURA - Que no comes.

CRISTINA - Apenas.

CURA - Que no duermes.

CRISTINA - Poco y mal.

CURA - Entonces debes aceptar que estás enferma.

CRISTINA - También tengo accesos de llanto, casi no río y sufro desvanecimientos. Pero no estoy enferma (Harmony 2001: 30).

CRISTINA - I am not, father. They have told you wrong.

[...]

PRIEST - I do not think don Marcos capable of lying to me. He begged me to come see you.

CRISTINA - My uncle did not lie to you. He is simply mistaken. He takes as sickness what is nothing other than honest rebellion. Did he not tell you, father? Did he not say how poorly I behave and how disgraceful I am?

PRIEST - (*Visibly upset*) He told me that you are a nervous wreck.

CRISTINA - He is right.

PRIEST - That you do not eat.

CRISTINA - Hardly.

PRIEST - That you do not sleep.

CRISTINA - Only a bit and poorly.

PRIEST - Then you must accept that you are sick.

CRISTINA - I also have crying spells, I hardly laugh, and I suffer from fainting. But I am not sick.

Cristina's words reveal an intimate self-awareness of her body and its condition. Though Cristina is burdened and suffers in grief as a result of her newly gained knowledge, she is

capable of rationally discerning between illness and her current state. To conceive of her current condition as an illness would mark her visceral reaction to the suffering of others as a momentary bout with a fleeting discomfort. Cristina makes it clear that this is not the case. Her beliefs are not momentary, and they will not fade as an illness might. Cristina's opposition to the priest's diagnosis is an explicit act of self-depathologizing. This action is powerful as it also goes some way towards depathologizing Sophocles' Antigone.

The Hippocratic treatise *On the Diseases of Young Girls* becomes especially relevant for our reading of this scene. As has been surmised above, the treatise may have influenced early interpretations of Sophocles' *Antigone* given that aspects of its diagnostic information could be mapped on to the character of Antigone. Antigone's fervor and her transgressive acts are often characterized as the actions of a girl in love with death. Such a characterization aligns with the treatise's description of a young victim suffering the symptoms of disease:

When these things occur in this way, the young girl is mad from the intensity of the inflammation; she turns murderous from the putrefaction; she feels fears and terrors from the darkness. From the pressure around the heart, these young girls long for nooses. Their spirit, distraught and sorely troubled by the foulness of their blood, attracts bad things, but names something else even fearful thing [...] Even when without visions, a certain pleasure exists, as a result of which she longs for death, as if something good.²⁰⁹

Pathologizing female acts in this manner, especially those deemed to be averse to the established order, removes their author's agency. In Antigone's case, this renders her actions inimitable. Her demeanor is abnormal, a consequence of illness, and should be guarded against. For Cristina, an imposition of illness entails isolation and a similar dismissal of her concerted resistance. By actively and unequivocally opposing a diagnosis, Cristina is

depathologizing herself and her Sophoclean predecessor. Cristina's words demonstrate an understanding of her actions and their potential consequences. Her resolute denial of illness cements her action as deliberate. This depathologizing shows a knowingness of Harmony's ancient Greek predecessor and the criticisms levied against Antigone by her historic reception. Harmony's work thereby disallows interpretations that reduce Antigone and Cristina as simple victims of malady. The two characters are conscious and intentional in their resistance. Consequently, we are guided to examine the stifling forces that perpetuate narratives of illness and madness as a way to diminish feminine agency and resistance. As an emblem of such forces, Harmony's priest character reaches for other gendered constraints when the imposition of illness becomes unfeasible.

Cristina's refusal of this imposition shows us that her beliefs are not temporary. They will not fade as an illness might. The priest's insistent diagnosis in spite of Cristina's denial is intended to diminish her beliefs in service of preserving the status quo. Since Cristina does not relent, the priest adopts another line of argumentation. In his attempts to modify Cristina's behavior, the priest endeavors to convince her of two things. First, he argues that Cristina has everything she could possibly want and therefore has no legitimate reason to feel as distraught as she does. When Cristina affirms that this is precisely why she suffers, meaning that she is aware of the extreme disproportionality of circumstances that allow for her to live in luxury, the priest incorporates Cristina's pending nuptials into his argument. He tells Cristina that her grievances are those of a '*niña mimada*', or a spoiled girl, and then proposes that the root of Cristina's affliction is an excess of pudor, or modesty.²¹⁰ His words are as follow,

²⁰⁹ Flemming & Hansen 1998: 251.

²¹⁰ Harmony 2001: 31.

PRIEST – (*Carefully trying to contain himself.*) There could be other reasons that you refuse to acknowledge.

CRISTINA – I know my reasons for misery.

PRIEST – Do you love Ignacio?

CRISTINA – Strongly, hopelessly. More than ever, and I already believed that I loved him.

PRIEST – You know how much he loves you.

CRISTINA – Father, Ignacio has nothing to do with my affliction. Quite the contrary.

PRIEST – Let me finish. Sometimes, due to the moral education we give to young maidens, when marriage approaches, the fear of fulfilling certain obligations...

CRISTINA – (*She laughs.*) Father, how little you know about young women, despite the fact that you are their spiritual advisor! You think the fear of losing my maidenhood has driven me mad? Oh, father! If you knew just how I love Ignacio, you would accuse me of sin.

PRIEST – Settle down, Cristina, and allow me to say what I came to tell you. God knew what he was doing by granting men and women the power of conception, and the church looks fondly upon the love of a marriage sanctified by the church. Do not fear if there are certain urges within you that modesty may not be able to accept (Harmony 2001: 31).

The priest claims that it is common for women to feel shame and to feel apprehensive about losing their chastity as their wedding approaches. Cristina rejects this notion outright and makes it clear that this is a laughable proposition. Notably, the priest's words to Cristina utilize the language of faith to compel Cristina to conform to the gender roles assigned by her society. The priest takes conception as a given, and his speech is largely designed with the intention of funneling Cristina into marriage. Cristina's marriage would then act as a reintegration to the society she is attempting to break away from or change. The priest takes marriage and its accompanying sexual and familial dimensions to be obligations which will reinforce normatively acceptable gender roles. The same argument is earlier used by Marcos when advising Ignacio about his treatment of Cristina.

MARCOS – A word of advice? Get married, but get married right away, and you will see how quickly she will move past all this. Why would she be worried about people she barely knows. It is because of the wedding. It is precisely because your wedding day is so near that she acts this way, even if she does not wish to accept it.

If her mother were alive, if she had an older woman by her side that was not ignorant like that Nana, her situation would be very different. Education provokes fears and anxieties in maidens when they are headed towards marriage, which is more important to them than it is to us. They say that a woman's life can be divided in two periods; before and after marriage, it is the husband who educates. Keep that in mind. Do not let yourself be disturbed by Cristina's fears, which are the fears of every girl (Harmony 2001: 18).

Marcos likewise sees marriage as a tool for directing and controlling women's behavior. The equivalence of thought between Marcos and the priest entangles the two figures and suggests the priest's allegiance to the establishment. The fact that Cristina ridicules his knowledge and suggestions drives the priest to manipulate the language of faith to modify Cristina's behavior. What then follows is a somewhat theological discussion between the two characters.

In this discussion, Cristina will mark her former apathy, her complacency, and her enjoyment of privilege and luxury as the sinful cause of her suffering. The priest moves to assure Cristina that she is a good person and will then turn to scripture to justify the status quo.²¹¹ When Cristina identifies the obvious immorality of the current disparity, she asks the priest to intervene. He does not take kindly to her words.

PRIEST – You say that I do not fulfill my duty. And I ask you, what do you think this duty consists of?

CRISTINA – (*Simply.*) Of standing beside the meek/humble.

PRIEST – Only beside the meek?

CRISTINA – Primarily. If They are the ones suffering most.

PRIEST – The church is catholic, that is to say universal. It loves the humble and the powerful equally, it loves all of the people it embraces in its bosom. It is above parties and ideologies, above social classes, and any group interest. Therein lies its strength. Therein lies the luminous truth that has supported it for twenty centuries.

CRISTINA – And when you tell the oppressed to resign themselves, that the kingdom of heaven will be theirs, are you not serving the interests of one class above

²¹¹ Harmony 2001: 33. When Cristina points out the extreme disparity between her family and the people of the pueblo, the priest speaks of 'rendering unto Caesar' to justify the status quo. When Cristina asks if Caesar is entitled to the personhood and happiness of others, the priest becomes more and more exasperated.

others? You know very well that had you intervened before my uncle, or before the governor, it would have likely allowed for Lorenzo to be buried.
PRIEST – In this country there was a long fight to separate us from the state. We abide by this so that we can continue serving our cause. We have renounced temporary power. It is not left to us to get involved with government acts (Harmony 2001: 32).

Cristina's rebuttal to the priest's use of religion and its role and limitations pinpoints the obvious imbalance of benefaction bestowed upon those of different classes. Cristina correctly denounces the priest's inaction and indifference in his prescription of resignation as a viable pathway for the most marginalized. Taken in conjunction with the priest's earlier appearance beside Marcos, wherein he advises the women of the pueblo to resign themselves as they implore his help, it is clear that the priest's inaction benefits the powerful and demands conformity and sacrifice only from the meek.²¹² In response to Cristina's assertions, the priest immediately hides behind the country's separation of church and state. His use of this defense is worth examining given that it helps contextualize the priest's standing and characterize his actions.

The revolutionary context of this play makes the priest's talking points especially troublesome. Following the Mexican Revolution, conservative catholic critics would write attacking the revolution for its 'anti-clerical' excess.²¹³ Examining the historiographical progression of scholarship about the Mexican Revolution, Bailey and Knight both lay secularism at the center of the revolution's more liberal principles.²¹⁴ The priest siding with the status quo at the dawn of the Mexican Revolution fits the historiographical paradigm observed in both works, namely that the church had a vested interest in opposing the revolution. Despite the priest's claims to the contrary, the church's power is linked to the preservation of the status quo. His attempts to dissuade dissent and to obfuscate or ignore

²¹² Harmony 2001: 16.

²¹³ See Bailey 1978, esp. pp. 67-68.

injustices mark the priest as a perpetrator and supporter of the same injustice. The priest had already established this dynamic when he told the women grieving Lorenzo that the church could not interfere in the 'established order' to bring about his burial.

While the priest uses the church to excuse his inaction, Cristina begins to break away from her faith to express humanist values.²¹⁵ In a departure from other iterations of *Antigone*, she here deprioritizes the burial of Lorenzo in favor of an active mobilization against injustice. She states the following:

CRISTINA - Que entierren o no a Lorenzo, es ahora hecho secundario. Lo importante es no contemplar con los brazos cruzados toda la injusticia que padece la gente (Harmony 2001: 33).

CRISTINA - Whether or not they bury Lorenzo is now a secondary matter. The important thing is not to passively look (lit. look with our arms crossed) at all of the injustice afflicting people.

Though burial was the trigger for Cristina's awakening, she has now begun to witness the depths of injustice. A simple burial cannot begin to mend the abuses perpetrated by her and her people. The priest grows increasingly impatient as Cristina continues to point out hypocrisies in this discussion. After some time, he angrily leaves Cristina, who thanks him for not succeeding in changing her mind. Though Cristina has broken with her faith and lost a confidante in the figure of the priest, she successfully identified another pillar of the establishment and stood her ground against it. Her exchange with the priest revealed an aspect of the methodology employed by those who preserve the current system.

Preserving the status quo requires a suppression of dissent. As the priest speaks to Cristina, the progression of his arguments reveals some of the forces coalescing to oppress

²¹⁴ Bailey 1978 and Knight 2010

²¹⁵ Cristina's prioritization of humanist values above religious mandates and the divine is also exhibited by Fuentes Mares' *Antígona*.

the vulnerable. Though Cristina is enormously privileged and from a wealthy family, the priest's language of illness and his deployment of religious expectations are intended to diminish her agency and self-reliance. By attributing her behavior to illness, the priest marks Cristina's beliefs as temporary and external. He further attributes these beliefs to an excess of modesty and a fear of losing her chastity. When deemed to be transgressive, a young virginal figure's actions are attributed to a madness caused by the absence of marriage and its implied gendered obligations. Like the ancient Antigone, Cristina's actions and thoughts are perceived as an abnormality to be suppressed via marriage and the constraints of established gender norms.²¹⁶ Harmony's play had already staged this idea in Act I Scene V, where Marcos advised Ignacio to marry as quickly as possible so that Cristina would forget about her troubles. The reductive perception of Cristina's autonomy and beliefs echoes Hippocratic prescriptions for dealing with the diseases of virgins. Female rebellion is treated as an illness or madness that can be easily cured through marriage. The priest's intervention follows the same line of thinking, which makes sense if we consider that he was sent to Cristina under Marcos' express orders. In the priest's messaging, faith and religion are used in addition to gendered constraints in an attempt to coerce Cristina to adopt an acceptable conduct. The conservatism of the church, which has abandoned those who are suffering and aligned itself with capitalist and political powers, alienates Cristina. However, this revelation further convinces Cristina that her beliefs are correct.

²¹⁶ The Hippocratic treatise advises the following for treating the diseases of young girls: "I urge, then, whenever young girls suffer this kind of malady they should marry as quickly as possible. If they become pregnant, they become healthy. If not, either at the same moment as puberty, or later, she will be caught by this sickness, if not by another. Among those women who have regular intercourse with a man, barren suffer these things." (Flemming & Hansen 1998: 252).

Subverting Sophoclean Expectations

The figure of Harmony's priest has special significance in relation to the ancient *Antigone*. In his overview of Harmony's play, Romulo Pianacci reads the priest as a Tiresias-like figure without providing much reasoning for their equivalence.²¹⁷ Although I am not persuaded by Pianacci's equating of the two characters, I do believe there is value in considering the coupling of Harmony's priest and Sophocles' Tiresias as an example of Harmony's subversion of expectations. Harmony has demonstrated throughout that her adaptation is closely attuned to the intricacies of Sophocles' *Antigone*. The entrance of a priest on stage would likely act as an evocation of the ancient seer for an audience with knowledge of the ancient tragedy. However, Harmony's priest is fundamentally different in form and function. Unlike Tiresias, the priest possesses no privileged knowledge. He does not operate under the influence of divine providence and clearly sides with the Creon figure (Marcos) to the detriment of Cristina (Antigone). In contrast to Tiresias in Sophocles' *Antigone*, there is no staged interaction, and therefore no break, between the priest and Marcos. The priest also gives no warning of the events to come and appears to have no propensity for foresight, divine or otherwise. Most importantly, it could be argued that the priest's conduct is incongruent with his espoused beliefs, and he instead acts an extension of the estate, facilitating its tendency for self-preservation.

By setting the expectation of a Tiresias character only to subvert and deny its execution, Harmony draws special attention to her priest's character and his conduct. As we see throughout his exchange with Cristina, the priest does not appear to be especially connected to the divine beyond the conceit of his profession. Harmony's priest enacts and expresses the will of Marcos, not that of the gods. If we consider the dynamic between the

²¹⁷ Pianacci 2015: 233.

two plays as one that traces an uninterrupted history of oppressions and abuses, this subversion of expectations contributes to a nihilist interpretation of Harmony's play. In addition to the common stratifications examined in both settings (the ancient and the more contemporary), Harmony's adaptation shows a further descent into a collective social decay. A man marked by his role and profession as an agent of God is complicit in the abuses of the establishment and subject to the whims of a tyrant. Harmony's subversion casts a light on the priest's hypocrisy, thereby condemning the use of the divine as a rhetorical tool for enforcing conformity to the status quo. In this regard, Harmony's play can be seen to adopt a markedly Marxist position, where religion is used to suppress dissent and perpetuate established social roles. Cristina's examination and subsequent renunciation of her faith suggests her cognizance of this dynamic. As will continue to be the case in this adaptation, Cristina's awakenings are accompanied by more loss and constraints.

Breaking with Family – Dissolving sororal bonds

The weight of Cristina's newfound understanding comes at a heavy prize. Scenes IV and V of Act II work jointly to depict the depths of Cristina's alienation and the constraints set against her resistance. Scene IV confirms that Cristina has been confined to her room by Marcos. She is only permitted to take brief walks in the garden, but the text tells us she does this alone. The first part of this scene sees Isabel and Nana discussing Cristina's condition. Both characters describe Cristina in terms of mental illness and lunacy, even referring to her as '*loca*', or crazy.²¹⁸ Nana qualifies her description by claiming that Cristina's madness stems from an intense sense of empathy afflicting her heart more so than her mind. Isabel is characterized as less kind and sympathetic. She complains about Cristina's behavior,

²¹⁸ Harmony 2001: 37.

claiming that it has created a fissure within her family. Isabel's qualms with Cristina and the consequences of her behavior are best encapsulated by this passage,

ISABEL - ...Éramos una familia feliz, muy unida; ahora todos somos desdichados por culpa suya. No es buena locura la que causa desgracia, la que ve más por lo ajeno que por lo propio (Harmony 2001: 37).

ISABEL - ...We used to be a happy family, very close-knit; now we are all miserable because of her. It is not a good madness that which causes such misfortune, that which looks out for what is alien instead of what is one's own.

The discussion between Nana and Isabel reveals that Isabel begrudges Cristina's behavior. Notably, Isabel once again speaks in terms of ownership, as she did when she formed a part of the chorus of proper ladies in the first scene of Act II. It would appear that Isabel's understanding of possession at this point in the play extends to concepts of responsibility and struggle. Isabel seems to believe that one cannot lay claim to that which is clearly another's concern – a tenet that limits her ability to empathize and appears to be a fundamental concept directing the conduct of the upper class. Isabel lays blame for their current familial distress solely on Cristina and not on Marcos, who is largely responsible for the endemic issues that have led to Cristina's transformation. When Nana attempts to soften Isabel's interpretation of Cristina's conduct, we see the following:

NANA – Perhaps she has the madness of heroes.

ISABEL – Now my sister is a heroine? Do not exaggerate, Nana. Cristina is nothing more than a poor and confused girl who gets lost in dangerous and alien paths instead of planning her wedding and delighting in her love (Harmony 2001: 37).

Nana continues to refer to Cristina's current condition as one of madness, but she qualifies it as being madness born from heroism. Nana, who would be more attuned to the injustices carried out by the estate and its supporters, likely sees Cristina's actions as something

logical, or at least something that can be understood through the frame of virtue and courage. Isabel's disgruntled response to Nana's words repeats her framing of Cristina's actions as dangerous and strange. She again makes use of the word 'alien' in reference to Cristina's path.²¹⁹ The word I am translating as 'alien' in both of the above passages is '*ajeno*' in the original Spanish. '*Ajeno*' can mean alien, but it serves primarily as a negative descriptor of ownership status, that is to say a descriptor of things that belong to someone else. This concept extends beyond property and can be used to describe things like problems, concerns, relationships, etc. By describing Cristina's path and her preoccupations as '*ajenos*', Isabel is fueling the idea that Cristina has no ownership over this struggle and no claim to the path she has chosen to walk. Isabel uses terms of ownership and blame that mirror aspects expressed in the previous choral episodes and in her reaction to Lorenzo's death. Her attachment to the ideas propagated by her social group drives a wedge between the two sisters in a manner that parallels Sophoclean conventions.

Ideas of kinship and membership are revisited in the second part of this scene. Isabel and Nana are eventually joined by Cristina as she returns to her confinement. What ensues is a discussion which acts as a repetition and condensation of elements observed previously in the adaptation.²²⁰ Like the priest, Isabel attempts to convince Cristina that she is sick, and that Marcos is treating her appropriately, as befitting a sick person. As will be shown below, she argues against any attempts to fight injustice stating that their efforts would be meaningless and amount to nothing. Isabel insists that as women they cannot bring about the

²¹⁹ Nana's claim marks Cristina as a heroine, which would make Harmony's characterization of her Antigone character akin to a visible trend in the majority of Latin American *Antigone* adaptations. However, Isabel's undercutting of this characterization is important, given that it opens the possibility for a more ambiguous reading of Cristina's character. Harmony's take on Antigone is not as univocally heroic as other Mexican and Latin American Antigones.

²²⁰ Among the repetitions, we importantly receive further confirmation that burial rites are deprioritized in this adaptation. Nana eventually attempts to convince Cristina that Lorenzo will be buried soon, citing that Francisco and his companions are about to turn themselves in. Cristina responds that they should not because

change Cristina imagines. Most importantly, however, she questions Cristina's membership status and her allegiances. At a certain point in their discussion, Nana decides it would be prudent to lie to Cristina. She believes that if Cristina is told that she will be released soon and that Lorenzo will be buried, she will go back to her old manner of being. Though the plan is ill-advised and condescending, the prospect of good news elicits this response from Cristina,

CRISTINA - ¿Todavía hay buenas noticias para mí? ¿Es que soy libre de ir a donde quiera y hacer lo que me plazca? ¿Puedo ir a reunirme con los míos? (Harmony 2001: 38).

CRISTINA - Is it still possible that there is good news for me? Is it that I am free to go where I wish and do what I please? Can I reunite with my people?

Cristina's words strike a nerve with Isabel who responds thus,

ISABEL - (*Espantada.*) ¡Deliras! Estás con los tuyos, a menos que ya no seas mi hermana ni la hija de nuestros padres ((Harmony 2001: 38).

ISABEL - (*Scared/Shaken.*) You are delirious! You are with your people, unless you are no longer my sister nor our parents' daughter.

Isabel's retort is central to the final part of Harmony's adaptation. As Cristina has endeavored to break from the system that saw her grow, she has one-sidedly claimed a kinship with the pueblerinos. She is aware that her presence is intrusive, but she continues to claim this kinship in spite of rejection and the potential cost this claim may incur on her personal relationships.²²¹ Cristina seems to operate with a different understanding of kinship

they will be killed upon returning. She says, 'burying Lorenzo is not that important' (Harmony 2001: 39). Cristina prioritizes the wellbeing of the pueblo people above burial rites.

²²¹ When confronting Marcos at the end of Act I, Cristina identifies her people as 'those who still reject [her]' (Harmony 2001: 24). Later, when receiving news of the wellbeing of Francisco and his allies, Cristina expresses joy at their wellbeing, even if they continue to reject her. Cristina wants to make the pueblerinos' struggle her own, but her interactions with the women of the pueblo and the messengers for the men have led her to understand that she does not have membership status in this group.

wherein ideological commitments trounce social relations.²²² In essence, Cristina's understanding of kinship does not necessarily require membership. This claim to kinship without membership causes problems for Cristina and Isabel's relationship in particular.

The bond between the sisters in Harmony's adaptation is turbulent and initially appears to depend on membership status. Cristina renounces her membership to the group that raised her, which includes her family, and she seeks to establish a kinship with the pueblo. Isabel argues that Cristina belongs with her family and should not seek to leave the roles established by the status quo. These positions do not appear to be reconcilable. Consequently, the sisters drift apart by the end of this scene. The result of this drift is comparable to the separation between Antigone and Ismene at the beginning of the ancient play. Though the sisters will share a fate similar to that of their ancient models, Harmony complicates the typical dynamic by highlighting Cristina's vulnerabilities and Isabel's sororal affection. The following passage shows the dynamic between the sisters at this point in Harmony's adaptation:

CRISTINA - Yo te necesito, porque estoy muy sola. ¿Me ayudarás a impedir más muertes e injusticia?

ISABEL - No puedo ayudarte en eso, porque no te entiendo y nosotros no podríamos lograr nada. No me pidas que intervenga: solamente puedo aliviar tu pena con mi cariño de hermana.

CRISTINA - (*Grita.*) ¡Pero es que tienes que ayudarme! Alguien tiene que ayudarme, porque siento que ya no puedo más. (Harmony 2001: 39).

CRISTINA - I need you because I am so alone. Will you help me prevent more deaths and injustice?

ISABEL - I cannot help you with that because I do not understand you, and we would not be able to accomplish anything. Do not ask me to intervene. I can only ease your sorrow with my sisterly love.

CRISTINA - (*Screams.*) But you have to help me! Someone has to help me because I feel that I cannot go on anymore.

²²² The failure to coalesce via sororal bonds runs contrary to Honig 2013's reading of the relationship between the two sisters as co-conspirators. Isabel's belief in her own political impotence disallows her from

This passage replicates aspects of the sisters' relationship in the Sophoclean play. Like her ancient precedent, Isabel points out the sisters' inability to enact change.²²³ Isabel does not explain their powerlessness in terms of gender in this passage, but she has relied on the established gender dynamics to justify her inaction throughout the entire adaptation. We can safely import the same argument to the above passage. Cristina presents a starker departure from her ancient precedent in terms of characterization. Though both Antigone and Cristina seek to recruit their sisters to their cause, Antigone rejects Ismene when Ismene refuses to follow her. In contrast, Cristina is desperate for help and allyship and suffers when it is not afforded to her. She will go on to reject Isabel, but only after she believes that Isabel has rejected her first. In the scene that follows, we see this sororal bond explored further as the sisters independently reflect upon their current condition and their fate.

Act II Scene V juxtaposes a monologuing Cristina with a discussion between Isabel and the chorus of proper ladies. While Cristina reflects upon her options, her fears, and the relationships she holds dear, Isabel speaks of her sister and the concerning path she has decided to follow. In the beginning of the scene, Isabel rather explicitly disavows her sister. We see this exchange between her and the chorus:

ISABEL - Los sucesos en la hacienda la han afectado de una manera extraña. Su conducta es tal que me he visto obligada a rechazarla.

SEÑORITAS - Bien hecho. Los principios están por encima del amor familiar, por fuerte que este sea. Lo dice la Biblia, ¿o no lo dice? Por lo menos lo afirma el señor cura (Harmony 2001: 40).

ISABEL - The events at the hacienda have affected her in a strange way. Her behavior is such that I have seen myself forced to reject her.

SEÑORITAS - Well done. Principles rank above familial love, no matter how strong this love may be. The Bible says it, does it not? At least that is what the priest says.

elevating sorority towards communal action. For more on *Antigone* and sisterhood as well as an overview of scholarship broaching the topic, see Goldhill 2012 pp. 231-248.

Isabel and the ladies reinforce what has been established throughout the adaptation. The principles they speak of uphold the establishment, and they have been ingrained in them by their environment and upbringing. Isabel's decision to abandon Cristina is applauded by the ladies. However, Isabel immediately expresses a deep affection for Cristina, and says she does not know how to help her.

ISABEL – How can I help my sister?

LADIES – She is no longer your sister.

ISABEL – I will look for a way to share Cristina's fate.

LADIES – No, stay away, stay far away, unless you, unless you also wish to be enveloped by that dark twister (Harmony 2001: 42).

Isabel is concerned that her sister is suffering. Strikingly, the ladies are quick to dismiss and negate Cristina's familial status, something they have no legitimate authority to do, due to her deviation from established norms and behaviors. This is represented in the following passage,

LADIES – She complains about every principle given to us by a careful education. She rebels against your uncle's authority. She defies religion and displays disorder in many other ways.

ISABEL – I know. Something dangerous disordered looms over her, like a darkness, like a force about to explode and knock her down.

LADIES – Something very bad is about to happen, as it does every time someone attempts to break the order of things. Have we not been taught to obey and be silent, to follow an open path paved by all of our predecessors? Why get lost in the weeds? Why search for an independent path, leaving behind the old one, the long, safe, and well-defined one that our lives must follow (Harmony 2001: 41).

The ladies no longer seek to explain away Cristina's action with the language of illness or madness. Among the ladies, Cristina is now seen to be acting in bad faith and in opposition to their core principles. When discussing their predecessors, the ladies use the words 'todas nuestras predecesoras', literally 'all of our predecessors', in the feminine. The descriptive

²²³ See Soph. *Ant.* 61-68, where Ismene explains she cannot help Antigone with Polynices' burial. Ismene reminds Antigone that they are women, and that they cannot fight against the law and men because their power and authority are too great.

'all' suggests that their predecessors, likely their mothers, grandmothers, and other women ancestors, observed an absolute adherence to the gendered and social expectations set by the established order. Cristina's divergence is interpreted as an affront to their lineage and cannot be tolerated. The fact that the ladies believe they can dictate sorority shows the rigidity of their social model and the incompatibility of Cristina's behavior therein. Though the ladies attempt to dissuade Isabel from further involving herself with her sister, Isabel concludes the scene by stating that she will seek a way to 'share Cristina's fate', for she feels that something terrible is about to befall her sister. This final assertion is reminiscent of Ismene's attempt to share Antigone's fate in the ancient play and briefly centers sorority and kinship as the subjects of the play's interrogations.

Isabel is perhaps Harmony's most puzzling character. In contrast to Sophocles' Ismene, Isabel's inactions are not motivated by fear or perceived helplessness. For the most part she appears to be a happy and willing participant of the current establishment. Her membership in the chorus of proper ladies suggests that she observes and accepts their collective values. She seems to have a deep understanding of what is acceptable for members of different social groups, and she behaves in accordance with this understanding. However, there are also glimpses of Isabel's awareness of perpetrated injustices and suggestions of her disapproval. At times, she appears to distrust the proper ladies.²²⁴ She was also the first to petition Marcos to allow Lorenzo's burial.²²⁵ These elements suggest that she does not completely buy every facet of the established order. Nevertheless, she has a tendency to side with the establishment, and she seems to resent Cristina for her resistance. In this regard, Isabel appears to be more culpable than her ancient model. Even this assertion

²²⁴ Isabel does not share the truth about Cristina when prodded by the ladies in Act II Scene I. Furthermore, she is reluctant to speak of her sister and the events surrounding the estate in the beginning of Act II Scene V, when the ladies express their concern for her and her family.

²²⁵ Harmony 2001: 10. This passage is quoted in full above.

is problematized, however, as her final words regarding Cristina seem to contradict her ideological commitments. Though Isabel has expressed a preference for the values upheld by the current system, she nevertheless wishes to share Cristina's fate. In contrast to Cristina, Isabel holds kinship to be a bond of blood and one that takes priority over any ideologies. Though she cannot accept Cristina's conduct, she accepts Cristina. Her assertion is thus a counterintuitive claim to sorority. Unfortunately, by the time of her assertion Cristina is well on her way to disavowing her sister.

Cristina's interlaced monologue ponders her status within her family and the potential losses she will face if she continues to adhere to her beliefs. She fears she will leave Ignacio a widower before they marry. She laments that she will not be a mother, expresses her fear for death, and she wonders whether Isabel was right in her admonishment. When her thoughts shift to Isabel and her words, Cristina speaks the following:

CRISTINA - ¿Acaso no he escuchado a Isabel? Aunque lo que ella diga, no debe tomarse en cuenta: no puedo tener por amiga a quien sólo de palabra me ama (Harmony 2001: 40).

CRISTINA - Have I not listened to Isabel? Although her words should not account for much: I cannot have as a friend someone who only loves me in words.

As Cristina meditates on her relationships, she adopts a conception of friends and enemies that, to an extent, resembles that of her ancient model.²²⁶ Like Antigone in Goldhill's interpretation, Cristina speaks of 'her own' people in relation to a self-imposed duty but here does so in a manner that transcends blood relations. She establishes a binary of friend and enemy that will dictate her commitments for the rest of the play. Though she does not use

²²⁶ Goldhill 1986. Goldhill frames his interpretation of *Antigone* in terms of *philos* and *echthros*. This framing can help us trace the progression of Cristina's relations, given that she experiences a shifting status among her community.

the words, Cristina will consider as *philoï* those who support and understand her cause and *echthroï* those who endeavor to preserve the status quo. Cristina's relations to the people around her are largely one-sided and end in disarray. By the play's conclusion, she is not fully accepted into the group she regards as *philoï*, and her adherence to her duty leaves an uncertain legacy.

Once Cristina commits to her newfound cause more earnestly, she finds it necessary to dissociate from her loved ones. Cristina now conceives of friendship and allyship as concepts to be enacted and not simply spoken. Like Sophocles' Antigone, Cristina now considers friendship (*philia*) to be shown through action and not words. When Cristina speaks of friendship following this statement, she counts the sacrificed and the oppressed as friends by virtue of their actions.²²⁷ In this regard, she precludes Isabel from her list of allies, given that she perceives her words of allyship to be incompatible with her actions. She further commits to this worldview when she ponders on her solitary condition.

CRISTINA: Estoy sola; ya no tengo amigos. ¡Pero qué digo! Tengo muchos, aunque no los conozca a todos. Soy amiga de todos aquellos que me antecedieron en el sacrificio, de todos los que vislumbran un mundo mejor y aún aquellos que, sin esperanza, han sufrido en sus vidas la maraca de todas las injusticias. No puedo flaquear. No estoy sola (Harmony 2001: 41).

CRISTINA: I am alone; I no longer have friends. But what am I saying? I have many friends, even if I do not know them all. I am friend of all those who preceded me in sacrifice, of those who glimpse upon a better world, and even those who, **without hope**, have suffered the mark of every injustice upon their lives. I cannot falter. I am not alone.

Cristina has attached allyship to action and now excludes those who do not act for justice from her circle. Harmony marks the timing of this realization as unfortunate by interlacing

²²⁷ Blundell 1991 argues that Antigone has an intense desire to help those she considered friends, even if they are in Hades. In Blundell's interpretation, Antigone considers *philia* to be shown exclusively through action and not words. Cristina adopts this same maxim into her ideology.

the rigidity of Cristina's new ideas with Isabel's thoughts of sorority and compassion for her sister.²²⁸ Isabel relaxes her stance and attempts to share Cristina's fate while Cristina ends up discounting Isabel and rushing towards her death. Both characters second guess their initial stance. Regrettably, the sisters pass each other by without reaching an understanding. Harmony highlights their bond and stages its failure to persist in order to demonstrate the destructive reach of the current system. The fact that this bond is not brought to fruition for a positive change heightens the sense of loss that permeates the adaptation's ending.

Breaking with the system – The prospect of transformative action and death

Cristina's final break from the system results in her death. In this section, I will discuss her final actions and their impact on her surroundings. Before examining her final moments, however, I believe it is worth briefly analyzing the mechanism which has worked to constrain and confine her as implemented against other characters in this adaptation. The same forces that have stifled her resistance have threatened and limited the advancement of other characters intent on changing the established order.

The most immediate example of the establishment's opposition to societal change manifests itself against Francisco and his group. The extent of the establishment's effect on this group is presented in the following passage wherein Francisco attempts to convince his companions that their choice to flee the estate was correct.

²²⁸ With her characterization of Isabel in this scene, Harmony anticipates Patricia Mills' interpretation of Ismene in her critique of Hegel's dialectic conceptualization of womanhood. For Mills, Ismene maintains a traditional role as a woman in her acceptance of and adherence to masculine power. Mills argues that Ismene wavers in her commitment to the good but decides to do what is right (standing by her sister and stating she will share her fate) out of devotion for her sister (See Mills 1986). This solidarity is replicated in Harmony's adaptation. Isabel abides by the status quo's prescriptions but ultimately behaves like Ismene in solidarity, even when the chorus of proper ladies warns against this. Noting this characterization of Ismene in a Mexican play is important given that other Mexican adaptations will use Ismene as a foil to Antigone and negative model of conduct in time of crisis. Perla de la Rosa, for example, is highly critical of Ismene's character (See next chapter).

MEN – Would it not have been better to continue as we were, eating a bit, living with them if only a little?

FRANCISCO – Dying slowly with every passing hour. No, I do not think we would have been able to continue as we were. No one can go on like that.

MEN – But at least we were together. We were their support. They were our breath/motivation.

FRANCISCO – What sort of support were we providing? What motivation did they give us? Every morning to await the fatigues and humiliations that the day would bring; every night to throw our weary selves on a straw bed to sleep in exhaustion, or to remember bitterly a journey without bread, without dignity, without time for love, tenderness, or camaraderie. We call it love when we lie with them for some time. We call drinking together friendship, a bit of pulque or fire water. We call ourselves living only because we are not dead.

MEN – We could try something else.

FRANCISCO – Like what? Every possible road was walled off for us.

MEN – Maybe we should have spoken to Don Marcos.

FRANCISCO – Do you not realize? You cannot reason with tyrants. I tried it and he responded with the threat of an army. When it is possible to speak, you speak, when it is possible to win something, you negotiate. But when they kick you out of your own land by force, when they take away your last bread crumb, when the troops fire against you...

MEN – Then you flee? You leave your women defenseless with the elderly and the children?

FRANCISCO – You fight. We have fled to save our lives, but we will not always be fleeing. We will return with weapons, with a fleet, with courage, and with more men (Harmony 2001: 26).

This passage makes it clear that the men of the pueblo, who fled the estate after the death of Lorenzo, were forced to abandon their homes and families to preserve their lives. The men appear to regret their decision to deviate from the established order, and it falls to Francisco to convince them that their manner of living was unsustainable and left them no better option. Most importantly, this passage gives us a clear pathway to revolution. The violence of the estate has deprived the men of their livelihoods and potential leaving only revolution as a viable path forward. Their diplomatic attempts to change the system, here described by Francisco as reasoning with a tyrant, resulted in their exile and persecution. When the men transparently attempted to change the system stifling them, their attempts were met with institutionally sanctioned violence, the scope of which we have seen throughout this chapter.

For the men, the only possible course of action consists of dismantling the system through force.

The men represent a more extreme example of the injustices observed by Cristina. Like Cristina, the men have been isolated from their community. Their attempts at change have been accompanied by immense sacrifice and loss, and the system has used coercive tactics to enforce their adherence to the established order. In the case of the men, this last point is manifested via Marcos' edict – Lorenzo will remain unburied until those who entered Marcos' estate alongside Lorenzo surrender and submit themselves to Marcos' authority. The extent of the violence inflicted against the men differs from that against Cristina as a result of their class and ethnicity. In contrast to what we see in their situation, examining the case of Ignacio allows us better to understand the variance in the system's application as it relates to social standing and gender.

Ignacio's role in this adaptation sees a similar development as that of Cristina, albeit the constraints of gender do not apply to him. Our introduction to the character sees him returning from a trip to the capital, where he was conducting some sort of legal process related to his inheritance of the estate. He initially perceives of Cristina as a girl afflicted by illness. As discussed earlier in this chapter, he excuses her behavior to Marcos by resorting to this same excuse. Nevertheless, Ignacio's love and commitment to Cristina is deeply rooted and leads him to adopt her cause as his own and to awaken to the injustices of the estate alongside her. He first confronts Marcos at her request. Though he goes into the meeting halfheartedly, Ignacio slowly begins to realize his father's terrible power and the bloodied history of his estate. This is best surmised in the following exchange.

IGNACIO - Well, it may be because Lorenzo was an Indian, and one gets used to seeing Indians without paying much attention to them, to let them half live by our side and work our lands, or to serve us in some other way. But that is very different

from killing them or having them killed. That is why I am affected; because my father ordered that they fire upon other people.

MARCOS – Should I have let them fire upon me instead? Rather they would not fire because they have no weapons and would not dare to do as much. But should I have let them take what is ours without defending it? Is that what you want?

IGNACIO – Forgive me, dad, but there is a question I want to ask you, if you will allow it.

MARCOS – Ask whatever you want.

IGNACIO – The land they ask for, is it ours or...?

MARCOS – They are ours. If you must know, they were theirs once, but they lost them because they did not know how to work them or retain them. If you are so worried about legality, I can show you the papers that confirm they are mine. I acquired them for you, for all of you, just like everything else I acquire. And you never wondered where your studies came from, your luxuries. It is precisely now, when I am forced to fight to preserve what we have for the first time, that you show yourself to be very sensitive. Tell me, son, how do you think a fortune is amassed in this country? And not just that; since you are now questioning everything, ask yourself whether it is better for the fields to be poorly cultivated indefinitely, or whether it is better for them to be under the care of those of us with the proper means to work the fields in a scientific manner. I am speaking of an honorable way of working, thinking about the country's progress, about the future, not just about yourself, or about me, or about the fieldworkers. You are young, you have studies, you must think big, without foolish selfishness or false sensitivities (Harmony 2001: 18-19).

Marcos deploys a version of the same arguments he has used to dissuade Cristina's conduct against Ignacio. Her resorts to legality and to claims of the country's wellbeing and progress to justify his violent and oppressive methods. This exchange leaves Ignacio in a complicated position, for he can no longer ignore the human cost of his immense privilege, something he was more than willing to do as made clear by his language in the beginning of this passage. To him, the so called 'indios' (Indians) were always there to be ignored. When Cristina attaches their own future and wellbeing to the fate of the people of the pueblo, Ignacio is forced to face the realities of social injustice and extreme inequality.

When Cristina later confronts Marcos, Ignacio sides with Cristina wholeheartedly, his allegiance to Cristina against the status quo is presented rather directly during the same scene.

IGNACIO – (*Bravely.*) I do not reject you, Cristina, and I think it is time for you to start counting me among your own.

CRISTINA – (*Happily.*) You too?

At the same time.

MARCOS (*Furious.*) You too?

IGNACIO – (*Simply.*) That's right.

MARCOS – You are a fool bound by love. I do not wish to keep listening to the disrespect of some kids who seem to forget what is owed in respect. (*To Cristina.*) Go to your room and stay there until I give you permission to leave. (*To Isabel.*) Go with her and tell the Nana not to let her out of her sight. (*To Ignacio.*) You, stay.

[...]

IGNACIO – You speak of love as if it were something unknown to you.

MARCOS – I do not know that type of love that forces a man to turn against his duties as a son.

IGNACIO – I felt that at least this time my duty as a son was to speak to you frankly, to behave as the man one must be to stand beside a woman like Cristina.

MARCOS – She is not a woman, make no mistake. She is a girl, a child who has grown without any brakes. If you are to marry her, you must be her brake and not her accomplice.

IGNACIO – A brake? And a yolk as well, I suppose. Her master, I imagine. But who could ever be Cristina's master?

MARCOS – You say this as if it brought you joy.

IGNACIO – Indeed it does, dad. An immense amount of joy: the joy of someone who unconsciously searches for a pupil and instead finds a companion. How could I not be happy to count as my wife someone who forces me to be strong and complete?

MARCOS – Against me?

IGNACIO – Before you, which is different. Ever since I was a student, I have had a great distaste for many things, and I did not dare to tell you anything. I knew what you were doing was wrong, and I kept quiet because you were the one doing it. I grew to fear Cristina's changes, to fear that you might speak to her and that she might respond because you would be forcing me to choose a position. As long as everyone kept silent, I could also be quiet without feeling guilty. I am ashamed of that now, dad. I am terribly ashamed (Harmony 2001: 24-25).

Cristina's actions motivate Ignacio to stand against what he now recognizes as injustice. He can no longer remain idle while the current system oppresses people for its own benefit. His declaration of shame succinctly mirrors the intense grief experienced by Cristina in her journey towards awareness. Ignacio is, as a matter of fact, guided by Cristina's example and suffering just as she was previously prompted to action by the death of Lorenzo.

The combined scenes depicted above have strong parallels with Creon's exchange with Haemon in Soph. *Ant.* 631-765. The Sophoclean dynamic between father and son is preserved in Harmony's adaptation. Like Creon, Marcos will come to accuse Ignacio of being ruled by a woman, and his refusal to yield will eventually result in the death of the young couple. Marcos' unbending convictions are on full display as he attempts to coerce his son with a mechanism comparable to that deployed against Cristina.

MARCOS – Then I am glad you have come to me because I want to tell you of my decision.

IGNACIO – We will exchange decisions, dad. I came to inform you of mine.

MARCOS – Let me speak first, because you may change your mind when you hear what I have to say. I am disowning you, Ignacio, if you persist with this attitude.

IGNACIO – I think I was wrong a moment ago. Our tracks converge here. I came to tell you that I am leaving forever.

MARCOS – And how do you expect to survive?

IGNACIO – You are depriving me of an inheritance I can renounce gladly, but you have given me things you cannot take away. When you conceived me, you gave me hands to work, and intelligence. When you raised me [you gave me] an education, for which I thank you.

MARCOS – You speak with arrogance. A long list of people, unknown to me and to you, worked to accumulate everything we own. Do you not believe yourself indebted to them; do you owe them no responsibility for whatever may happen to this patrimony?

IGNACIO – I cannot be responsible for what our ancestors did with no other guide than their raptor-like instinct. I cannot be blamed for being the final male in a doubtful lineage founded on injustice and displacement.

MARCOS – You have no right to speak to me like this.

IGNACIO – I was not aware that any sort of right prevailed here. I am simply participating in our long-held tradition (Harmony 2001: 42-43).

As he has done with the people of the pueblo and with Cristina, Marcos attempts to use his rights and privileges to coerce Ignacio into behaving in a manner he deems acceptable.

Ignacio highlights the hypocrisy of this method. He denies the fact that legal rights have ever been observed within the estate, alluding to the violations through which estate holders have achieved their position. Once Ignacio succeeds in rejecting his father's efforts, Marcos threatens to keep Cristina under his authority, effectively separating the two lovers. Marcos

cannot use the same instruments of gender and class to suppress his own son, who essentially shares his own social status. Therefore, he reaches for the constraints available to him as a result of Ignacio's relations. When gender and class cannot be used to suppress those who deviate from the system, legality and isolation are used as instruments to quell dissent. Marcos' final threats are those of legalistic abandon. His entire character arc has seen him use the law, Creon's Law, as a powerful tool to oppress and confine. The same instruments adopted to increase the wealth of his family and to secure his version of national progress are utilized at his discretion to enforce adherence to the norms of the establishment. It is this very propensity for abuse and coercion that leads to the death of his children and sparks a violent revolution.

The final scene in Harmony's adaptation begins with the last confrontation between Ignacio and Marcos. As described above, Ignacio tells his father that he is renouncing his inheritance and wishes to leave the estate to live simply with Cristina. Ignacio stands as Cristina's final ally in her rebellion against the estate. Unfortunately for the young couple, their hopes for the future are cut short as both are gunned down by the soldiers stationed at Marcos' request. Though Marcos never intended for the couple to die, this was a result of his rigid edict declaring that any trespassers attempting to approach Lorenzo's body were to be shot on sight. It is the couple's death that reveals the pervasiveness of the social stratifications explored throughout this adaptation. Though both characters imagined a simple life without participating in systemic oppression, the two are gunned down before they can make this a reality. Their potential is cut short by a violent act of suppression – an act inadvertently invoked by Marcos and sanctioned by the state. The tools meant to dissuade insurrection and oppress the pueblo ended up enacting tragedy upon the estate and irreparably fracturing Marcos' family.

It is important to consider the circumstances of Cristina's death in order to fully grasp the end of this tragedy. We learn of the young couple's death from Jacinto, who acts like a messenger throughout much of the adaptation. He tells us that Cristina was gunned down upon entering the fenced-off plot of land where Lorenzo laid exposed. Curiously, Cristina's motivations in entering this field are unexplained. Though we receive no clear indication of her intentions, I would argue that Cristina's choice asks us to consider the weight, or lack thereof, of an individual's actions in the midst of a collective struggle. In her monologue, Cristina speaks of an unspecified duty she must uphold.²²⁹ While pondering, she states that she will likely not be able to bury Lorenzo alone and then says she must ensure that Francisco lives. The duty she mentions is most likely the preservation of Francisco and his men's lives. From this assumption, I see two possibilities for her entering the field. It is possible that Cristina's escape was meant to safeguard the men's lives by directly warning them not to approach the estate. This would work if Cristina believed Nana's false words when she claimed that the men would soon turn themselves in to assure Lorenzo's burial.²³⁰ On the other hand, Cristina may have attempted to bury Lorenzo, despite her repeated deprioritizing of this action, to dissuade the men's approach with her singular action. Whether or not she was to succeed, this act could potentially preserve Francisco's life. If successful, there would be no reason for the men to turn themselves in. If she failed, the men would be alerted of the troop's presence and intentions. Her discussion of death and her fears makes most sense in the context of the second possibility. In this case, Cristina would have attempted a burial not for the sake of offering proper burial rites but for the sake of enabling a sociopolitical change by safeguarding a potential revolutionary figure.²³¹ It is

²²⁹ Harmony 2001: 39-40.

²³⁰ Harmony 2001: 38-39.

²³¹ I do not believe Cristina's protection of Francisco would stem from simple kinship. Though she speaks of Francisco as a brother-like figure in the beginning, the play repeatedly tells us that the two had little contact

important to note that Cristina's allegiance in this adaptation is to the living and not the dead. This is a crucial inversion of the Sophoclean model. For Cristina, it is oppression and not burial which causes outrage. It is a concern for the living and not for the dead that leads to her demise.

The final moments of the play portray a choral scene reacting to the young couple's death. In contrast to the choral scenes depicted in the rest of the adaptation, this scene presents a chorus of pueblerinos and pueblerinas in direct conversation. The women reveal that Marcos has left his estate and the stationed troops no longer hold their position. They say they will use the opportunity to bury Lorenzo before the pueblo men head off to fight what will become a revolutionary war. The men remark on power's tendency to turn against its own, alluding to the fate of Cristina and Ignacio as it relates to Marcos.²³² Though they are aware of Cristina's fate, the men describe her struggle as alien (*ajeno*) to them and call it Cristina's '*lucha incierta*', or uncertain struggle. When the women elaborate on Cristina's suffering, they claim her and Ignacio as their dead and state that a debt of memory is owed to them. The men say they did not ask for their sacrifice and proceed to say the following about Cristina in particular:

HOMBRES - Fue inútil todo cuanto hizo. Ningún acto personal y aislado nos conducirá a la victoria. Nadie puede asumir nuestros intereses por nosotros, los propios interesados (Harmony 2001: 45).

MEN - Everything she did was useless. No personal and isolated act will drive us to victory. No one can assume what is in our best interest in our stead, when we are the most interested.

Many of the men's assertions in this final scene hold credence. Cristina only recently became aware of their situation and her participation therein. Her progression was one filled

beyond childhood. It is more likely that Cristina has conceived of Francisco as a friend within the parameters established by her monologue. Cristina thus believes that Francisco is fighting for a just cause and decides to safeguard his life at the potential expense of her own.

²³² This notion is expanded upon by Perla de la Rosa in her *Antigone* adaptation. In De la Rosa's work, those in power acknowledge societal problems only when their consequences affect them directly.

with doubt, and her understanding of the pueblerinos' suffering was superficial. She projected ideas created in isolation onto a struggle she unilaterally claimed as her own. She did this as a marked outsider occupying a position of privilege. However, Cristina acted at great personal cost. She lost allies, a support system, personal freedoms, and ultimately her life. It is perhaps the fact that she acted in spite of great loss that elicits these words from the women:

MUJERES: Dura lección que pagó Cristina al precio de su propia vida. La sangre derramada por una causa justa, a la postre no puede ser inútil. Por eso iremos con Isabel y la Nana a enterrar a Ignacio y a Cristina, a quienes hoy no podemos regatear el título de hermanos (Harmony 2001: 45).

WOMEN: A difficult lesson, the one Cristina paid with her own life. Blood spilled for the sake of a just cause cannot be useless in the long run. For this reason, we will go with Isabel and the Nana to bury Ignacio and Cristina, to whom today we cannot deny the title of brothers.

This passage immediately follows the one above, and it also concludes Harmony's adaptation. As a simple and direct response to the men, the first sentence reads as a confirmation of the men's claim. Yes, a singular and personal act will not lead to improved conditions for the oppressed, and Cristina paid the ultimate price to learn this lesson. However, if read teleologically, Cristina's lesson could encompass everything she experienced throughout the adaptation. Her suffering allowed her to understand the brutal reality of oppression and inequality as well as the reach of established power and its self-serving tendency to destroy and suppress. In either case, the next sentence reads with adversative force. Though it has no adversative conjunction, the women seem to be stating that regardless of the outcome, no action taken for the sake of justice is useless, no matter how small or isolated it may be.

The women end their response by extending membership to Cristina and Ignacio, claiming their corpses as their own in the process. Though the women affirm the meaning of

the couple's actions, the ending of this play is tense and troubled. The women have claimed kinship with the departed and have symbolically overcome the stratifications that prevented cross-class unity throughout the adaptation. Regrettably, this is only done in death, and even then, only by the women. The men maintain the existing barriers and reject Cristina and Ignacio. The pueblerinos' thoughts on group membership and the struggle at large appear to be at odds and divided among gendered lines. The women recognize Cristina as working in favor of their struggle. The men contradict and ignore the women's thoughts as they set off to fight what will become a revolutionary war. The gender polarities present since the Sophoclean original are preserved and once again reinscribed at the end of this tragedy. The incongruence of thought observed in the play's conclusion is indicative of the revolution's aftermath and signals the continuance of rigid and pervasive social distinctions. The men's side will emerge victorious from the revolution, but the fate of the women remains largely the same. Harmony leaves her women with little hope for progress as she compels the audience to reflect on how little has truly changed between the time portrayed in her adaptation and her modern reality.

A Bleak Panorama - Women after the Revolution

Harmony's adaptation capitalizes on its time and setting to produce a striking resonance with contemporary issues. Reimagining *Antigone* in the context of the Mexican Revolution opens Harmony's play to teleological readings which account for the revolution's historic aftermath. This adaptation sheds light on the pre-revolutionary stratifications of class, gender, and ethnicity by pitting its protagonist against them. The fact that Cristina awakens to inequality but is killed before she can effect change shows just how deeply entrenched these problems are. When the men from the pueblo reject her struggle and fail to recognize her efforts, we are left with a rather bleak picture for the revolution's

aftermath. As the adaptation progresses, Harmony presents the men of the pueblo as agents of change and harbingers of revolution.²³³ As such, it is jarring to see that the men who seek to fundamentally overturn established class dynamics disregard and diminish the voices of the women of their own community. The men's final rejection of Cristina and ignoring of the pueblerinas shows their exclusionary positioning and foreshadows its continuance.

In maintaining the subservient role of women, the men are investing in a future that is not far removed from the status quo they aim to topple. The foundation for a new order preserves the stratifications that will continue to repress and devalue subsets of the population. In this instance, revolution holds little significance for the liberation of women. The women of Harmony's adaptation are ignored by the men to whom they pledge undying support. Nonetheless, they are expected to give their children and family members to the war effort. In addition, they share in the suffering of Nana and Isabel as they mourn the deaths of Cristina and Ignacio. The women of the pueblo see the young couple as the first of their war casualties. However, they cannot fully claim the dead as their own because of socially enforced distinctions of gender and class. Any hope for change held by the women is immediately offset by the prospect of loss and suffering.

Group identity – Dissonant Choruses and Collective Memory

The final moments of Harmony's adaptation compel us to consider the role of a tragic chorus. In addition to reinscribing gender distinctions, this final scene centers memory as a concern for this adaptation. This seems most likely if we account for some of the

²³³ ACT I Scene VII depicts a discussion between Francisco and his companions as they resolve to take up arms and fight against Marcos. The men speak of their women and the expectations they hold concerning revolution. The men characterize the women as weak but also assume their unquestioning cooperation in the upcoming struggle. Though the men are aware that they are bringing war to their homes, they also believe they are bringing hope and better fortune. For Francisco especially, this prospect should be more than enough to assure the women's unquestioning support. He expresses this very thought as the scene ends (Harmony 2001: 26).

traditional functions and concerns of an ancient chorus, and in particular those of a Sophoclean chorus. To this end, the work of Simon Goldhill is especially relevant.²³⁴ In his discussion of the Sophoclean chorus and its performance, Goldhill makes a couple of observations that are useful for this analysis. In the first, he states that the chorus undergoes a dramatic development of its own between and within odes. Under this assertion, the chorus becomes a living entity which is able to shift its dialogue and its interpretation of ongoing action and character dynamics as dramatic events unfold. This is certainly the case for Harmony's chorus of pueblerinas. Although they claim to hate Cristina in an earlier passage, by the play's conclusion the women stand in solidarity with Cristina's struggle and wish to honor her memory. Secondly, Goldhill considers the chorus as a group that is struggling to understand and negotiate with transgressive individuals with extreme personalities. This assertion is also true of the chorus of pueblerinas in Harmony's adaptation, but it complicates our understanding of the choruses of pueblerinos, serious men, and proper ladies.

When we consider choral passages as instantiations of group identity and popular feeling, Goldhill's observations hold for all of Harmony's choruses but are complicated by the polyphony of different voices. The choruses hold on to their own distinct sense of normalcy and offer their reactions to concerns relevant to their specific perspective. In Harmony's play, the multivariance of perspectives is predicated upon factors of class, gender, and ethnicity. As such, the different choruses do negotiate with, advise, and even chastise characters they deem to be extreme, but they do so within the parameters of their social conditions. In doing so, the choruses themselves can be deemed as extreme proponents of specific ideas in a manner that is unusual for Sophoclean choruses.

²³⁴ See Goldhill 2012 esp. 109-133.

Harmony's choruses thus become more akin to independent dramatic characters with collective force. Harmony's use of different and often fragmented choral entities serves to advance the messaging of her play. The various choruses demarcate the incongruent perspectives and experiences of the members of varied social backgrounds. Understanding this dynamic, the women's discussion of memory and the men's immediate dismissal compels us to wrestle with the concepts of memory and collectivism.

As the women remark on the debt of memory owed to Cristina and Ignacio, we are left to question memory's associations to group membership. Throughout the adaptation, we have seen attempts to suppress memory from both the oppressors and the oppressed. Though these suppressions may differ in their intent, an element of group membership is embedded in their deployment. When Cristina and Ignacio seek to learn more about the estate's history and the land's ownership, Marcos and Nana both attempt to dismiss the importance of unearthing this history. Both characters endeavor to suppress knowledge of the past and ultimately characterize it as irrelevant to the present. Though the two belong to vastly different classes, their parallel suppression of memory suggests an overlap in their group identities. As deeply attached members of the estate with vested interests in its preservation, the two characters present a unified account of memory.

Harmony again explores the idea of memory as a powerful indicator of identity when she has Cristina attempt to establish a bond with the women of the pueblo. Cristina appeals to shared childhood memories in hopes of establishing a common ground as a pathway to group allyship or membership. When the women reject this claim to memory, they are denying Cristina access to group participation. It is not until the women accept Cristina as the first casualty of their struggle that they incur a debt to her memory. Their final utterance suggests that the two concepts (memory and membership) are intricately entangled. The

men's rejection, however, serves as a harsh reminder that the stratifying distinctions examined throughout the play also affect the creation and preservation of memory.

Like Marcos earlier in the adaptation, the men decide that a certain memory is irrelevant to their current situation. Whereas Marcos rejects the importance of a history of violence and exploitation, the men reject the memory of Cristina's struggle and resistance. In spite of the women's acceptance, the men deny Cristina even a symbolic membership by refusing to honor her memory as they would the death of their own people. Reading teleologically through the Mexican Revolution and its reinscribing of stratifications, we can intuit that the women's final symbolic gesture of solidarity will fail to coalesce into a genuine allyship and political power. In this final scene, Harmony once again presents us with a fractured group that fails to agree on a collective memory. This dynamic serves as a final plea for us to examine our own narratives and those that have been imposed upon us by tradition and structures of power. We are forced to consider that cultural narratives are driven by the more powerful, and they likely suppress and ignore the contributions of the marginalized.

By refocusing memory in her play's final moments, Harmony once again affords us an opportunity to read her play while considering the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution. We must remember that the men are off to fight a war, and Cristina and Ignacio are considered (by the women) to be the first casualties of revolution. The myth of the revolution and its implications for a shared sense of Mexican identity are brought into question in a manner that compels us to consider the forgotten and suppressed narratives of the marginalized and neglected. We are asked to interrogate national myths, their creation, the makeup of their creators and defenders, and ultimately their function. Harmony's play suggests that those precluded from the collective project of memory are necessarily

excluded from a group's membership. Her presentation of the divisions of gender, ethnicity, and class reveal that a singular identity and narrative is more than likely suppressing those dissatisfied with the status quo. A singular cultural narrative is therefore necessarily exclusive and suppresses dissenting voices in favor of preserving the structures of power. Even a narrative of revolution becomes compromised when it dismisses its participants' accounts in the process of memorializing.

Conclusion

The stratifications observed throughout Cristina's journey are multifaceted and deeply ingrained. Gender, class, and ethnicity all coalesce to disenfranchise and delegitimize the vulnerable. Even at the play's conclusion, where the distinction of class is somewhat diminished by the young couple's death, we see that the symbolic deterioration of one barrier fails to dismantle additional layers of oppression. This in turn results in a reinscribing of social stratifications and a perpetuation of exclusive practices. Consideration of the play's revolutionary context and its historic aftermath would suggest that revolution is largely futile when it does not address widespread stratifications. Observing Cristina's progression in light of this futility compels the audience to wrestle with the pervasiveness of injustices and their progression beyond their removed temporality. This is not a hopeful message. Harmony uses the myth of Antigone to shed light on the apparent permanence of injustice. Like the ancient heroine, Cristina is restricted by a social order. The constraints of gender are especially limiting for both Antigone figures, and the actions they take outside those constraints result in their deaths. Furthermore, Harmony's engagement with Sophocles' *Antigone* reminds us of the arbitrary nature of law and its unequal application. As is the case with Sophocles' Creon, Marcos has the power of law at his disposal and uses it capriciously

to enforce his vision of order. In the setting of Harmony's adaptation, this unequal application results in the oppression and abuse of those marginalized by society's powerful.

Like the revolutionary context presented as the adaptation's setting, contemporary Mexico faces extreme inequality and injustice along the lines of gender, ethnicity, and class. The struggles presented in the three time periods (Sophoclean Thebes, revolutionary Mexico, and contemporary Mexico) share notions of oppression and stratification that are not overcome with the progression of time. Harmony's adaptation brings us face to face with the reality of oppression. It compels us to accept that awakening to injustice and the suffering of others is not sufficient for significant and long-lasting change.

Beyond its exploration of oppression and injustice, Harmony's adaptation asks a complicated question. What does it take for us to see each other as human when even death is not enough to unify us? We receive no answer. Unlike Fuentes Mares' *Antígona*, Cristina's potential for growth and change is abruptly negated by death. Harmony's adaptation promotes revolution's futility in the face of widespread and continuing stratifications, and it offers no significant hope that this is likely to change. Comparing the issues afflicting the characters of this adaptation with the circumstances of Mexicans at the end of the 20th century we find too many parallel accounts of suffering.²³⁵ We see the preservation of the same stratifications. We hear the same conflation of progress with the encroachment and expansion of capitalist systems. Harmony's work compels us to accept that not much has changed nearly a century after the onset of revolution. In presenting Cristina's plight and journey, Harmony shows the fragility of peace. This adaptation denounces apathy towards oppression and complacency in injustice. It characterizes these

²³⁵ The rise of the EZLN and its Zapatista movement at the end of the century shed light on the marginalization and economic disparity afflicting indigenous groups in Mexico (Van der Harr 2004). Income and class inequality in Mexico are pronounced, and modern economic policies seem to be exacerbating these

notions as prime contributors to the social degradations that lead to war. It proposes that genuine change is impossible when we perpetuate and legitimize sociopolitical distinctions. Ultimately, we understand that a society destroys its own future when it invests in unilateral accounts of progress at the expense of the humanity and diversity of its people.

issues (See Aguila et al. 2012). Gender discrimination and gender violence are widespread and continue to plague the country (See Fregoso & Bejareno 2009, Sweet and Escalante 2010, Lopez 2019).

IV. Life and Love in the City of Death: Resistance beyond resilience in

Perla de la Rosa's *Antígona: Las voces que incendian el desierto*

Introduction

Perla de la Rosa's *Antígona: Las voces que incendian el desierto*, (*Antigone: The voices that set the desert ablaze*), transforms Thebes (Ciudad Tebas) into an analogue for Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua at the height of a series of femicides that had plagued the city for years and continue to afflict Ciudad Juárez and the country in general.²³⁶ The setting of this adaptation was especially resonant with its immediate audience, for whom the femicides constituted a tragic and ongoing reality. First performed in 2004, De la Rosa's *Antigone* spoke, and continues to speak, against a legacy of violence from within one of the darkest periods in the city's troubled history.²³⁷ Unlike the previous two *Antigones* examined in my analysis, De la Rosa's play is not as concerned with revolution per se. Instead, this *Antigone* shifts its priorities to present a potent meditation on the politics of resistance and resilience.

In this chapter, I will examine De la Rosa's *Antigone* as an anguished condemnation of governmental abuse and neglect. I will argue that De la Rosa aptly transforms the myth of *Antigone* to denounce societal apathy and to equate complacency to complicity in an environment of violence. The social stratifications brought about by class and gender difference are again present in this adaptation. Examining this adaptation through said lenses, we will see that De la Rosa deploys her *Antigone* as a pointed social critique highly attuned to its city's heartbeat. This adaptation is concerned with giving a voice to the marginalized who are shown to be neglected and concealed by those in positions of power. Sophoclean models are adapted at times and distorted at others in order to create a play that

²³⁶ De la Rosa 2004.

²³⁷ For performance details, please refer to my introduction under the 'Tracing a Tradition' subsection.

voices the pained cries of the marginalized while staging power's tendency to conceal, oppress, and self-destruct. Furthermore, we will see that De la Rosa's play adapts the Antigone myth to explore issues of border politics, citizenship, identity, economics, migration, and even anticipates an escalation of violence in its self-aware presentation. Perla de la Rosa's *Antigone* stands as a remarkable accomplishment. It is an adaptation of the ancient tragedy enriched by its engagement with Sophocles' works. This adaptation stands as a thorough diagnosis of a city's problems, a condemnation of those responsible for its decay, and an examination of the actions necessary for its future ascent from darkness.

Structure of Analysis

De la Rosa's *Antigone* operates on multiple levels. At times, the play encompasses spheres that do not seem immediately reconcilable. This adaptation is as universal as it is regional. It is informed by a localized context but is simultaneously hyper-aware of an external and globalized gaze. It exists as a self-aware adaptation of the Sophoclean tragedy, yet it carves its own path as a play unconstrained by conventions and expectations born from its knowledge of the ancient tragedy. It displays a remarkable fixation with death but is ultimately concerned with issues of life and human dignity. Furthermore, the play is repeatedly complicated and recontextualized by its reimagined characters, deployment of temporality, and use of parallel and contextualizing scenes. In order to examine De la Rosa's *Antigone* with the requisite care and attention, I here provide a brief map of this chapter and the analysis advanced therein.

I will begin this chapter by providing a scene-by-scene summary of the play followed by some brief observations. Afterwards, I will present a preliminary survey of De la Rosa's engagement with Sophocles before turning to examining the importance of the play's setting and its socio-historical context. The ensuing analysis will foreground the

relation between the ancient Thebes, Ciudad Juárez, and De la Rosa's Ciudad Tebas in order to highlight this play's exploration of the politics of concealment, corruption, and resilience. Ultimately, I will argue that De la Rosa's play compels us to understand that to live full and dignified lives resiliency in the face of oppression is not sufficient. De la Rosa's *Antigone* directs us to understand and lament our failings in the hopes of creating a better future beyond the shackles of complacency and complicity.

Summary

De la Rosa's *Antigone* has 18 scenes that vary greatly in length and content. The central plot of the play revolves around Antigone's search for the body of her sister, Polinice. Polinice has been missing for some time and is presumed to be yet another victim of femicide. We quickly learn that Antigone was no longer living in Ciudad Tebas (Thebes), opting instead for the life of a wanderer. The news of Polinice's disappearance compels Antigone to cease her wanderings and return to Tebas. As we follow Antigone on her journey, we are slowly exposed to the city's miserable state and learn of the government's culpability in its decay. Most importantly, we bear witness to the state's complicity in perpetuating violence against its most marginalized yet essential citizens – working-class women. De la Rosa's *Antigone* condemns the incompetence and cowardice of Ciudad Tebas' corrupted leaders and characterizes their actions as sinister and perverse. Although Antigone's relentless search and its political consequences are the main focus of this adaptation, not all scenes concern these matters directly. The play is interlaced with a series of vignettes depicting city life as experienced by the marginalized women of Ciudad Tebas. Some of these scenes are set loosely within the city. Some are murkier in their use of temporality and setting. Some of these stories are external to the Sophoclean narrative but are clearly contained in the same environment. These scenes provide a great amount of

cultural context and help explain the city and its inhabitants. Although external to Antigone's narrative, these scenes are an innovation in terms of their work for contextualization. They are not disposable in terms of Antigone's narrative and instead direct us to reflect on the narrative in relation to present day realities. In many ways, they operate similarly to the prologue in Brecht's *Antigone* and expand on its ability to contextualize dramatic action and elicit an audience response. Antigone's story, told alongside that of the many women depicted in this play, creates a chilling portrait of life in the margins within a city haunted by the shadow of death and the constant threat of violence.

Scene I, titled 'One of too many such stories', is a scene external to Antigone's narrative which does much to contextualize the play's setting and foreground its thematic concerns. It tells the story of three sisters – Clara, Isabel, and Elena. Isabel's role in the scene alternates between that of a temporally removed narrator and a contemporaneous participant engaged with the scene's action. The scene is a reenactment of the previous night's events. As narrator, Isabel comments on these events as they unfold. The scene starts as Isabel and Elena arrive at their home and notice that someone has left a bag of food for them. Although the two sisters are wary of the bag, since it signals that someone entered their home while they were out, their hunger leads them to happily partake in the bag's contents. They assume the bag was dropped off by their sister Clara, who Isabel tells us had been missing for nearly a week. The sisters initially assume that Clara was simply busy working at a factory. As the sisters converse, we learn a bit about the city and its circumstances. The sisters comment on the difficulties of factory work but remark especially on the dangers presented by commutes to work. It is clear from their words that leaving their home presents a greater personal risk than working a difficult job. The sisters further discuss the idea of descending into a shelter indefinitely. They do not elaborate on what these

shelters are or what descending into them entails. However, their conversation suggests that the shelters are safer than the city and are places where their labor can be exchanged for food. Upon presenting this idea, the two wonder about Clara's whereabouts for the past week. It is at this moment that a scream of terror is heard outside their home. Elena wants to investigate, but Isabel tells her to stay seated.

Losing their appetite due to the scream, the sisters retire to sleep. Isabel notices that Clara's work attire is hanging alongside her other clothes. Elena assumes that she was likely fired and bought food for them with her severance pay. A second scream of terror is then heard outside their door. The sisters remain indoors until dawn, awaiting Clara's return. When Isabel eventually opens the door, she is brought face to face with the lifeless and bound body of her sister Clara. The sisters realize that the screams from the previous night were Clara's. Her body lies bound before their door. Upon realizing this, Elena reaches for a knife to sever her sister's bonds, stating that she will bring her inside and hopefully bring her back to life somehow. Isabel then tells her sister that she should drop that knife and move away from Clara's body. She states that being seen near Clara now would bring the same fate upon them. A man then knocks on their door. He questions the sisters about the dead woman's identity and blames her death on her own disobedience. According to his words, the woman was dead because she ignored established safety protocols and left her home without a man's company. Isabel denies knowing the woman. The man suddenly notices Elena holding a knife. As he shifts his attention to her, Elena runs towards Clara. The man chases after her. Isabel closes the door to her house, leaving her two sisters (Elena and the lifeless Clara) to their fate.²³⁸ As the scene closes, Isabel tells us that her response was

²³⁸ Unfortunately, the published copy of this play does not include a cast list. It would be interesting to see whether the characters here depicted are more forcefully mapped onto characters in the Sophoclean narrative by way of their casting choices. If the character playing Isabela, for example, also played Ismene, this would evoke a resonance between the characters that may guide our interpretation of both characters.

purely motivated by panic. Just as she did nothing to help Clara upon hearing her screams, she now shuts Elena outside her house, dooming her to suffer Clara's fate. Isabel's final thoughts question Elena's actions. Why was she willing to die simply to liberate their sister's body? Isabel's final words reveal that Clara's only wish was to live. This scene will generate questions about fear, culpability, and resilience that we are then invited to map onto the Sophoclean narrative.

Scene II, 'Antigone's Return' is a very short scene in which Antigone looks upon Ciudad Tebas and laments its condition. The scene is important for two reasons. It establishes Antigone as an outsider, someone who left the city only to return upon hearing of her sister's disappearance. Furthermore, it highlights the play's thematic concerns with justice and death. Antigone laments that the city's dead receive no justice and no burial rites. In doing so, she links notions of justice with the city's treatment of its dead, an association that will be revisited as the play progresses.

In Scene III, 'Creon's presentation – The decree', Creon presents himself as the fated ruler of Ciudad Tebas. He speaks of slanders levied against him and diminishes the claims of dead women in his city as falsities intended to tarnish his legacy, the city's reputation, and its advancement towards progress. He categorically denies the reality of any femicides and refutes the existence of any dead and unmourned bodies. He goes as far as to claim that the women reported missing have been recently spotted patronizing a Mediterranean spa. He describes anyone who would persist in claiming that women have been killed under his watch as miserable and '*sin patria*', or country-less.²³⁹ Creon demarcates the parameters of civic participation in the city and thus excludes the women who would seek justice for the wave of femicides committed in the city. He then makes an official decree, whereby he

²³⁹ This scene and its implications will be examined at length below.

declares anyone who would seek to tarnish the city's reputation as enemies of the state and subject to the full weight of the law. Upon making his decree, one of Creon's counselors speaks of the rising pressure from people who seek justice for the city's disappearances. Creon doubles down on his characterization of the women seeking justice as liars and attention seekers. The counselor commissions an employee named Victor to get creative with a PR campaign. With this scene, the state's intent is shown to be that of concealment. The deaths of countless women are made out to be a matter of public relations as opposed to one of criminality, miscarried justice, and lack of accountability.

Scene IV, 'Taking a Stand – The arguments of Antigone and those of Ismene', shifts our attention to the desert. Here, Antigone finds herself among a group of people who have banded together to scour the land for the bodies of femicide victims. Antigone's sister Ismene arrives to meet her. An argument between the sisters breaks out almost immediately. Ismene begins by noting that Antigone looks sick. She comments on her lack of sleep and equates her desperate search to madness. Antigone argues that the only madness being inflicted is that which oppresses the women of the city, the apathy of those who can carry on normally, and the twisted mandates of the city's dignitaries. Ismene's response states that their fatigue and suffering cannot turn back the machinations of fate and time, and so the sisters should resign themselves to the idea of their Polinice's death and let her rest in peace. Antigone agrees that their sister should rest peacefully, but she retorts that the injustice perpetrated against her and so many others should not allow the living to continue peacefully as if nothing had happened. At this point, the sisters' discussion becomes heated. Ismene argues forcefully for them to forget about their current suffering and accept their sister's death. After all, Ismene argues, death comes to everyone and is but an instant. Antigone should prioritize the living along with her own life. In her response, Antigone tells

Ismene that the circumstances of one's death matter. No one should suffer the pain and humiliation being inflicted on the victims of femicide. She mentions the possibility that their sister is alive and being subjected to the same. When Ismene expresses her incredulity at the notion that their sister is alive, Antigone sates that she needs certainty, even if it comes in the form of their sister's corpse. More importantly, she says, she needs to find those responsible for her disappearance. Antigone seeks justice for her sister above all else. At this point, Ismene begins to blame Polinice and her recklessness for her fate. She likewise blames Antigone and their father for being inconsiderate and reckless in their conduct. She accuses Antigone of leaving the city, of blaming her for the death of Polinice, and of being obsessed with her own displays of courage and righteousness. Ismene then discusses their helplessness before the political system and Creon's mandate. She expresses that it is in their best interest to obey and to live. The sisters go back and forth on this matter, further demarcating their ideological stances beyond the possibility of reconciliation. Ismene wishes to live even if it means obeying and bending to the established system. Antigone considers herself almost dead within a system that denies her basic worth and humanity. As the scene ends, Antigone appears to break all bonds with Ismene, claiming that her sororal arms will not be there to welcome her when Ismene finally finds her courage.

Scene V, 'Eurydice in public defense of Creon', presents a press conference in which Creon's wife Eurydice answers reporter questions. Accompanied by her son Haemon, Eurydice had attempted to visit a memorial service for missing women presumed to be victims of femicide. She is rejected outright by one of the mothers and is then left to answer reporters' questions. The mother in question blames Eurydice and the people she represents (the state and its acolytes) for withholding the whereabouts and conditions of her daughter (the mother's). This moment demonstrates the people's cognizance of the state's complicity

in the violence enacted against women. As Eurydice is rejected by the people at the memorial, she turns to the reporters and asks for understanding on behalf of the pained women. Her rhetoric is undercut by a reporter who asks about her husband's decree, thereby highlighting the incongruity between her words and his compassionless mandate. Eurydice denies being aware of Creon's proclamation. She goes on to praise her husband for his efforts and magnanimity in dealing with these disappearances. The same reporter then questions Eurydice about corpses found in the desert, the state's compulsion to deny their existence, and rumors about the city's morgue being filled with the corpses of women. Eurydice's responses become more and more incongruous. She denies the existence of corpses, but then states that the few corpses that have been found were those of women who lived risky lives, effectively shifting the blame onto the victims. She states that justice has been made on behalf of those women. As the reporter pushes back against this narrative, Eurydice blames women for their misfortunes. She blames the victims of the city for their way of life, the mothers of dead girls for alleged neglect, and working-class women for acting unaccompanied. She then makes a sharp turn towards an economic argument that somewhat echoes Creon's stance concerning the femicides as fabrications meant to economically damage the city. By using language and vocabulary to characterize Eurydice as a cold and unempathetic character, the entire scene demonstrates the complicity and apathy of those in power. It highlights power's role in perpetuating injustice for the sake of its own interests. As the scene ends, Eurydice assures the people of Creon's abilities as a leader and dignitary.

Scene VI, 'The murderer's concealment', is a short but disturbing and emotionally intense scene offering a parallel narrative. A man covered in blood appears on stage. He is being washed by his mother, who assures him, and herself, that things are okay as she hums

a lullaby. As the man leaves without saying a word, the woman breaks into a prayer and then into tears as she tells her god that her son is only following orders. He is only executing god's will. The scene shows a different type of complicity couched in concealment from a different perspective. A murderer is coddled and reassured by his mother – a woman aware of the atrocities he commits who refuses to act to his detriment, even if this means death and suffering for others.

Scene VII, 'Antigone and Haemon reencountered', stages a reunion and conversation between Antigone and Haemon in the desert. Antigone continues looking for her sister. Haemon approaches her, but it is immediately clear that he does not know what to say to her. The scene implies that the two had a relationship before Antigone left Tebas. This relationship seems to have been stifled at least partly due to Haemon's constant excusing of his father's conduct. In this scene, Antigone aligns herself with a collective – a loosely defined group of people searching for bodies in the desert. When she denies an association to Haemon, she mentions that she is aligned only with those who share her blood. She glosses this group to encompass her sister Polinice and the other disappeared folks who go unacknowledged and unrecognized by Haemon's father and the state he represents. Haemon explains that he wishes only to be with Antigone. He declares his love for her and tells her to ask whatever she wants of him. Antigone wishes to enter the morgue to search for her sister.

Scene VIII, 'Deceit and Rancor', is another parallel narrative in which a woman condemns the state's treatment of its dead. The woman relates the manner in which social inequalities are perpetrated, even in death. Victims of violence are cast into oblivion alongside the poor. The woman tells us that the state paid for her own daughter's funeral but buried her so far away from the city that she will never be able to visit her tomb. She

accuses Creon of participating in a farce of generosity only to get rid of the bodies he cannot deny.

Scene IX, 'First venture into the morgue – Evidence', depicts Antigone and Haemon's clandestine entrance into the city's morgue. Haemon has agreed to accompany Antigone while firmly believing that they will simply confirm that the morgue is empty. This belief is immediately shattered as Antigone begins to open body bags containing the mostly unrecognizable remains of murdered women. In searching for her sister, Antigone finds the body of a young woman which catches her attention. She comments on the young woman's beauty and states that she had a small hope of finding her sister in so human a state – that is to say, not brutalized beyond recognition. Antigone then resolves herself to break this young woman's body out of the morgue. As Antigone ponders, a guard approaches their location, and Haemon and Antigone are forced to hide. While hidden, they see the guard approach the young woman's corpse. He takes her into his arms and dances with her, bringing the scene to a macabre close.

Scene X, 'The anecdote', presents a woman's narration of a day in the city. Offering yet another perspective of the life in the city, the woman retells a brush with death she experienced while waiting for the bus after work. She mentions hearing flurries of gunshots and taking cover under a bus bench, once again confirming the reality of danger facing the city's inhabitants thus far presented throughout the play.

In Scene XI, 'Antigone's second venture into the morgue – Capture', Antigone is apprehended as she attempts to retrieve the young woman's body from the morgue. She is caught by the same guard who was seen dancing with the young woman's corpse. Upon hearing what Antigone wishes to do, the guard berates her with highly sexualized gendered language, and essentially assaults her while forcing her into a dance reminiscent of what he

inflicted on the young woman's lifeless corpse. The scene ends as the guard tells Antigone that he is duty bound to turn her in.

Scene XII, 'The choice to enter the shelter – Pestilence', continues the woman's narration from Scene X. She explains that upon returning home, she learned from the news that the gunshots she witnessed were due to a dispute between rivaling bands of drug traffickers. The woman explains that all she has in the world is her young daughter, and her world would crumble if she were taken away through violence. The woman ponders whether she should leave the city. Ultimately, she decides to enter a shelter. As the scene closes, she remarks on an asphyxiating scent present in the city. She compares this scent to pestilence.

Scene XIII, 'The confrontation between Antigone and Creon – The arguments', presents the most direct borrowing of language and structure from Sophocles' *Antigone*. It begins with the guard from the morgue dragging Antigone before Creon. He reports that he found her attempting to retrieve a body from the morgue in direct violation to his edict. Creon is very aware of Antigone's identity. He proceeds to question her about her actions and motivations. Antigone is unapologetic about her actions and forthcoming with her intentions. She makes it very clear that she was aware of his edict and chose to defy it. As the two exchange words, each character remarks on notions of law and justice. Creon speaks of his own laws as those made for the city's benefit. Antigone allies herself with natural and divine laws. Furthermore, she accuses the man of condemning the victims of violence to oblivion. Antigone argues that no law will silence the voices of those who seek justice. She will not be the last to violate Creon's laws in the search for justice. Creon's retort is couched in legalistic terms discussing the difficulties of being a head of state and the needs of the city at large. Noticing that Creon is twisting his words to elevate his position, Antigone eventually accuses him of being responsible for creating the rampant impunity through

which murderers are left unchecked. In unambiguous terms, she states that he is the culprit of the city's genocide, who has allowed accountability to disappear from the city alongside justice. When Creon reacts with force and intimidation, Antigone accuses him of being afraid – a fearful tyrant afraid of the truth. A conflicted Creon berates her. He indirectly threatens her with death, stating that a common tyrant would have already cut out her tongue and killed her. Nevertheless, he ultimately allows her to leave on her own two feet. The scene ends as Antigone proclaims herself to be dead and to have been dead ever since her sister was killed with impunity.

Scene XIV, 'Creon's dilemma', is a discussion between Creon and his advisor Victor. Shaken by his confrontation with Antigone, Creon appears to be unstable. When Victor reports that news of the situation in Tebas is being picked up by the international press, the two conspire to suppress information and to make a show of action without actually making any commitments to change. Victor suggests a superficial show of military restructuring, and a farce of a tribunal commissioned to deal with the reports of femicides. The latter should buy them time by projecting the image that they are actively working on making justice for the victims and their families. Finally, Victor suggests that Antigone should be silenced. Though he is not explicit, he suggests that Antigone is a threat and should be killed for the benefit of the city. The scene ends with Creon giving Victor the go ahead for most of the matters discussed while he ponders what to do about Antigone.

Scene XV, 'Creon confronts his father. He sides with Antigone', presents a confrontation between father and son. Haemon seeks an audience with his father. He attempts to convince his father to release the bodies of femicide victims to their families and to punish those responsible for their deaths. He mentions that Antigone is not the only one who thinks as she does. The city as a whole demands justice and truth. Haemon initially

speaks with the utmost respect to his father and uses language of admiration and empathy. When he realizes that his father will not be moved, he makes his allegiance to Antigone explicit. Creon accuses him of being enslaved to a woman. As he does so, Haemon leaves but not before revealing that he found over 200 bodies in the morgue. Creon breaks down as he can no longer deny their existence to his son.

Scene XVI, 'The sentence', is a short scene in which Creon commands Victor to enact the law, essentially ordering that Antigone be executed. Creon states that his son will soon get over her death and characterizes this action as the lesser evil.

Scene XVII, 'The execution', sees Antigone return to the desert to continue her search for Polinice. Haemon comes to her and declares his love and allegiance for Antigone. He asks her to accept him as he does not wish to leave her side. As Antigone declares her love for Haemon, gunshots are heard and Haemon falls dead.

The final scene, 'Despair and the question', sees Antigone monologue as she aimlessly resumes her wanderings in the desert. She voices a lament for Tebas wherein she decries the injustices that besiege her city. Antigone explicitly condemns Tebas' corrupted leadership and bemoans its continuance. She grieves on behalf of the unrecognized dead who have been cast into oblivion as a result of the state's malicious self-interest. Her final words carry the weight of prophecy and declare that justice will not exist in Tebas until its citizens mourn and weep for the deaths of every single woman cast into the desert to be forgotten.

De la Rosa's *Antigone* ends by centering issues of justice, human dignity, and memory before a backdrop of loss and suffering. It reflects the immense grief and frustration felt in a city where death and violence are too often met with apathy and perpetuated by corruption and impunity. As De la Rosa's narrative closes, Antigone's solitary figure

embodies the isolating effects of the city's distorted atmosphere. Throughout the play we see death become a common occurrence. The line between the living and dead is blurred beyond discernment. Facts are concealed as malicious fiction. The acts of seeking or speaking the truth are prosecuted as transgressive. We see character relations become strained and even broken. Nevertheless, the final scene of this play presents a living Antigone who is moving forward. Though compelled to leave her city, she embodies resistance and resilience in the face of violent oppression. As an image of hope and resilience, Antigone begins to break with the tragic register expected of the play.

(Preliminary) Engagement with Sophocles

De la Rosa's play is knowingly aware of the Antigone myth and its historic reception. Her narrative shares important dynamics and concerns with the ancient Greek tragedy. Consequently, reading through a Sophoclean lens heightens our awareness of this adaptation's thematic concerns and demarcates its deviations from the ancient narrative as important. Burial rites are at the forefront of this adaptation and usher in discussions of human dignity, memory, and the state's role in oppressing and obfuscating these matters. As is the case in the ancient tragedy, the boundaries of the city constitute a central concern which dictates membership, privilege, and civic identity. There is likewise a gender dynamic that limits women's existence to the domestic, restricts their actions to the invisible, and seeks to punish their engagement beyond what is deemed acceptable by these boundaries.²⁴⁰ In addition to the examinations of gender and class inscribed via De la Rosa's engagement with and adaptation of the ancient play, her choices of setting and characterization display a

²⁴⁰ Weiner 2015 notes the gendered connotations of the domestic and public spheres in his analysis of De la Rosa's play. Though I agree with many of Weiner's assessments about this dynamic, this chapter will expand on this notion and attempt to provide additional cultural nuance for the role of women. As I aim to show, De la Rosa presents an environment that is not quite content with limiting women to a domestic sphere.

desire to present a story that is informed by *Antigone*'s history but unconstrained by its associated expectations. This is especially the case in terms of characterization. Expectations created by character names are repeatedly subverted or intensified in service of the play's pursuits. Antigone's characterization in particular is fraught with knowledge of the character that extends beyond what is portrayed in Sophocles' *Antigone*. As we will see in this analysis, De la Rosa appears to be particularly interested in Antigone's exilic wanderings alongside her father (and brother), Oedipus, and the resemblance between the two characters. We will see that Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* and *Oedipus at Colonus* linger in the background as important intertexts for the development of this play. Antigone's wanderings alongside Oedipus will prove fundamental for her characterization in De la Rosa's play and will help explain the character's interpretation of the city's sufferings.

Somewhat contradictorily, De la Rosa deviates from the ancient myth of Antigone by making Ismene a constant and uninterrupted presence in Ciudad Tebas. She is removed from the exilic experience, which becomes a point of contention for the two sisters. Ismene thus becomes a foil for Antigone and comes to represent those who succumb to fear and the state's destruction of the city. In this sense, we will observe that De la Rosa highlights the failed sorority between Antigone and Ismene and instead makes allyship and association reliant on exhibited behaviors and actions. Importantly, the gender of Polinices is changed. Antigone's actions are driven by the death of her sister, Polinice, who has committed no transgression to warrant her death.²⁴¹ Her existence is instead emblematic of the victims suffering under Creon's current regime.

The drive towards concealment and the burial of women underground in this play is much more literal and disturbing than what is initially apparent.

²⁴¹ There appears to be no equivalent to Eteocles in De la Rosa's play. No comparable character is mentioned or referenced.

Creon himself inhabits the space of an irredeemable oppressor and tyrant in this adaptation.²⁴² His motives and preoccupations are shown to be self-interested on multiple occasions, and no sympathy is evoked in his characterization. Unlike in the ancient tragedy, the arguments of Antigone and Creon cannot be seen as equivalent or part of a ‘right vs. right’ impasse. This resituates the ethical tension of the play and directs us to reflect on the horrors of collusion, complicity, violence, etc. while contemplating existence in a setting where life is treated cheaply. Ethical tensions hence exist in the disparate responses to the city’s problems instead of being born from the positions of the play’s primary ideological adversaries. Perhaps the most interesting and complicated work of characterization in this adaptation is reserved for the city of Thebes (Ciudad Tebas). Tebas is repeatedly anthropomorphized throughout De la Rosa’s adaptation and especially so through Antigone’s speech. To properly understand this characterization, it is necessary to examine the historical context of Ciudad Juárez leading up to this play’s production. Doing so will allow us to understand what is at stake in Antigone’s search as well as the complex dynamics and factors influencing the city’s current sufferings and their continuance.

Characterizing Thebes – The Borders of Ciudad Tebas and Ciudad Juárez

The city of Thebes, denoted throughout the adaptation by its Spanish name of Tebas, is presented as an anguished landscape surrounded by desert sands. It is in these sands that the women of Tebas are concealed. There is an eerie disjunction in the language meant to reflect the reality of Tebas. On the one hand, the ‘great city’ is described by powerful characters as a center of industry, an economic powerhouse, and a place of progress and

²⁴² Along with the concern for burial rites, this choice more closely aligns this play with the observations posed by Söderback and Pianacci concerning modern productions of *Antigone* mentioned in the previous chapters.

prosperity.²⁴³ On the other, it is a city of death, a city of unmourned pain, a city abandoned by justice and virtue. The very name of this city, Ciudad Tebas, evokes two distinct locations and histories that converge to exacerbate the play's concerns and their underlying causes.

'Tebas' directs us to consider the ancient Thebes as depicted in Greek Tragedy and myth – a troubled city ruled by a family of heroic pedigree. The originator of this royal bloodline, Cadmus is often renowned as a monster slayer who predates even the legendary feats of Herakles himself. Nonetheless, his myths tell of him incurring the wrath of Apollo in his founding of the ancient city, thereby tarnishing the fates of his descendants and the city itself. Cadmus' descendant, Oedipus, is praised in ancient myths for his cleverness and wisdom in overcoming the monstrous Sphinx for the benefit of the city of Thebes, a feat which installs him upon its throne. However, he is also responsible for introducing a deadly plague into the city as a result of his unintentional act of patricide. The ancient city from which Ciudad Tebas gets its name was doomed and plagued by constant suffering – a suffering directly caused by its rulers and their actions. The ruling line of Cadmus repeatedly incurred pollution upon its city. Although we see the rulers themselves suffer through this pollution in the ancient narratives, the citizens of Thebes are the most disproportionately affected by their failings. They are afflicted by sufferings for which they hold no responsibility and from which they have no reprieve. De la Rosa's narrative positions Ciudad Tebas in a similar fashion. Notably, however, Thebes is not De la Rosa's only model for Ciudad Tebas, as the very structure of the city's name invokes the image of Ciudad Juárez. In addition to being similarly constructed in linguistic terms (De la Rosa chooses the

²⁴³ Creon and Eurydice are the primary agents pushing the narrative of the city's greatness. Their claims can be found most clearly in scenes III and V.

name ‘Ciudad Tebas’ as opposed to simply ‘Tebas’), the narrative of this play makes its connections to the historical Ciudad Juárez prominent and readily discernable.²⁴⁴

Images of the desert and its sands are continuously evoked throughout De la Rosa’s adaptation. As we will see in the analysis below, Antigone’s entrance on stage is a sort of monologue directed at the city in which she remarks on the city’s moaning winds, its merciless sun, and its dried-up river.²⁴⁵ These are all features that find direct correspondence with the climate and topography of Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua. Juárez is a city with a desert climate and punishing sun, where summer temperatures frequently and continuously surpass the 100°F marks. The winds of the city reach speeds that often surpass 40mph and carry with them desert sand.²⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the city endures. The winds of Ciudad Juárez are as much a feature of its climate as are its desert sands, the intensity of its sun, and the diminished waters of the Rio Grande, which runs between the cities of El Paso and Ciudad Juárez, acting as a natural delineation of the border despite its status as an endangered river. All three of these features are clearly alluded to in De la Rosa’s construction of Ciudad Tebas. Likewise, the socioeconomic character of the city is intently modeled on the realities of Ciudad Juárez.

The economy of Ciudad Juárez is one that is highly dependent on factory labor. Maquiladoras, or ‘maquilas’ for short, are foreign assembly plants which capitalize on Mexico’s cheap labor, comparatively lax health and safety regulations, and low tariffs

²⁴⁴ De la Rosa’s evocation of Ciudad Juárez through Ciudad Tebas (Thebes) runs somewhat contrary to the deployment of the city in ancient Athenian theater. Whereas Thebes was meant to represent a negative model for Athens on stage, Ciudad Tebas is a very clear parallel for Ciudad Juárez and thus largely negates the distancing qualities typically associated with the use of Thebes in ancient drama. For more on Thebes as an ‘Anti-Athens’ see Zeitlin 1992.

²⁴⁵ De la Rosa 2004: 192

²⁴⁶ There is a common adage which makes reference to Juárez’s winds in terms of the futility of a situation. When a certain action is ineffective, it is not uncommon to hear ‘le hizo lo que el viento a Juárez’, or ‘that was about as damaging as the winds are to Juárez’. The meaning of this largely local phrase refers to the intensity of the winds that traverse the city. The second part of this adage states something to the effect of

resulting from NAFTA.²⁴⁷ These factories number in the hundreds throughout Ciudad Juárez and encompass everything from American auto parts to Japanese electronics. Factory work usually involves assembly of imported products which are then exported to the US.²⁴⁸ Although the ideas of free trade established by NAFTA promised increased wages and improved working conditions for Mexican laborers through the incorporation of foreign capital and manufacturing into the country, the execution of the treaty has fallen short of its promises. Conditions for maquiladora workers are less than ideal and range from extended exposure to loud noises to continuous work in extreme heat environments.²⁴⁹ Physical demands notwithstanding, the entrenchment of these jobs into the economic system of Ciudad Juárez has created additional challenges and obstacles for workers.

The maquiladora sector contributes billions of dollars in exports to the Mexican economy. An estimate from the US Department of Justice states earnings of over US\$29 billion in the early 90s, a number that has ballooned to an approximated US\$430 billion in the last few years, approximately \$360 billion of which are made from exports to the US.²⁵⁰ Despite fluctuations in Mexico's economy, the maquiladora sector has continuously proven itself an important contributor to the country's GDP, often surpassing the average economic growth of the country by a substantial margin.²⁵¹ Despite the maquiladoras' importance to the economic success of the country and its cities, maquiladora workers are paid low wages, work under difficult conditions, and receive few benefits from their employers.

For many workers, a maquiladora job is a necessary evil. Social inequalities and the inaccessibility to the mechanisms of social mobility make it so that maquila jobs are the only

'nomás le tumbo el sombrero', or 'it knocked off its hat', simultaneously a reference to the intensity of the city's winds and the resilience of the city.

²⁴⁷ See Davidson 1992, and Flores 2017.

²⁴⁸ Flores 2017.

²⁴⁹ Flores 2017 provides a brief yet informative overview of current maquiladora conditions and the abuses encoded into the maquiladora system by the application of NAFTA.

option for a large sector of the population. Given the patriarchal history and structure of Mexican society, this is especially the case for women and accounts for their overrepresentation in the maquiladora workforce.²⁵² As maquiladora work is often the only recourse for people in need of employment, the lives of workers are linked to the maquilas. Workers depend on the maquilas for wages and health benefits. Employers are aware of this and have historically demonstrated a prioritization of profits over the wellbeing of laborers.²⁵³ This in turn has resulted in an ecosystem that facilitates systemic abuse against maquiladora workers, a population that is often poor, undereducated, and overwhelmingly female.²⁵⁴ The poor wages paid to maquiladora workers combined with the city's reliance on maquila work for its economic prosperity has created social conditions that have facilitated, and almost normalized, the creation of a labor class that is extraordinarily vulnerable to abuse and violence.

Ciudad Juárez's history of femicide and gender violence is one deeply entangled with the class and gender disparities exacerbated by the economic conditions of the city. Beginning in 1993, Ciudad Juárez has been the site of hundreds of murders which have targeted young women and girls of the city.²⁵⁵ These murders are often accompanied by instances of extreme sexual violence. Despite their frequency and brutality, they have been met with an unacceptable level of impunity and what can only be described as contempt by authorities of the state. Crimes of this nature have been underreported, obfuscated, and even denied by authorities and ruling bodies of the city at different points in time. Access to case files have been blocked, thereby disallowing all corroboration of incidents as well as any

²⁵⁰ See Observatory of Economic Complexity index, 2022

²⁵¹ See MEXICONOW post, 2021.

²⁵² Pantaleo 2010.

²⁵³ See especially Flores 2017.

concretization of the knowledge of these crimes including their exact number and the extent of the violence perpetrated against innocent victims.²⁵⁶ This is an issue of public safety as much as it is a product of capitalist patriarchal systems which devalue the existence of women in favor of maintaining an exploitative state of affairs.²⁵⁷ It is these threads of the embattled history of Ciudad Juárez that Perla de la Rosa draws from in the creation of her play's Ciudad Tebas.

Like Ciudad Juárez, Tebas is a great city, both in size and economic power. It is a city of manufacturing that relies on the labor of a predominantly female workforce. Nevertheless, it is a city that suffers from a pathological disregard for the very women who uphold its existence. The women who fall victim to these terrible attacks are concealed by the city's sands and condemned to oblivion – unmourned and unavenged. The parallels between Tebas and Ciudad Juárez are highlighted and intensified via De la Rosa's use of characterization and her narrative structure. In particular, her play's use of interwoven episodes further entangles the realities of Juárez and Tebas. As we explore these realities and their interconnectedness, we will see that De la Rosa's *Antigone* is a denouncement of society's failings to protect its own in service of a myopic sense of self-preservation.

The socio-economic and political realities of Ciudad Juárez are central for understanding the concerns and pursuits of this *Antigone*. Likewise, Sophoclean intertexts and models from *Antigone*, *Oedipus the King*, and *Oedipus at Colonus* are fundamental for the development of the play. In addition to these components, the *Antigone* of Bertolt Brecht

²⁵⁴ See Davidson 1992, Flores 2017, and Wright 2012. Davidson maintains that approximately 2/3 of maquiladora workers were women in the early 90s with more contemporary estimates placing the number closer to 75% (TECMA 2013).

²⁵⁵ Monárrez Fragoso 2002.

²⁵⁶ Monárrez Fragoso 2002.

²⁵⁷ Monárrez Fragoso 2002, Morgado 2012, and Wright 2012, and Meredith & Rodríguez Cortés 2017 all explore the issue of femicide in Ciudad Juárez (and in the case of Morgado, Hispano-America) as a product of patriarchic capitalist culture, the embracing of neoliberalism in Mexico and Latin America, and economic conditions resulting from the rollout of NAFTA and its effect on Ciudad Juárez.

is especially influential for De la Rosa's *Antigone*, as its use of the prologue influences the parallel scenes which direct us to engage with the realities of Ciudad Juárez through its representation via Ciudad Tebas. As we move to the formal analysis of this play, I will aim to highlight evocations to the ancient Sophoclean corpus as well as De la Rosa's application of this Brechtian technique and its significance.

Setting the Stage and Entangling Narratives

De la Rosa's *Antigone* begins in Brechtian fashion. It depicts an extra dramatic prologue and first scene which act as thematic forebearers for the ensuing drama. The prologue itself is a simple monologue in which an unnamed woman, a citizen of Ciudad Tebas, narrates the status of the city and its treatment of her kind (women of low socioeconomic standing). Given its brevity and thematic importance, the passage is here included for analysis:

WOMAN 1 – I am a woman in this city, where everything is made of sand. For years we have been struggling with the War. To be a woman here is to be in danger. Because of this we have decided to build shelters below the sand. To cover ourselves in sand. To shelter ourselves below the sand in order to continue living. It is a matter of hiding ourselves, of disappearing from the enemy's gaze. Not all of us have made this choice. Some think they are safe... they pretend that nothing is happening... or like Clara, they arm themselves with courage and go out to the factories... Someone has to work (De la Rosa 2004: 188).

The woman's words foreground some of the most pressing thematic concerns of this adaptation. We are immediately informed of the plight of Tebas' women, who find themselves fighting a war for survival. The woman's words reveal that the war is fought against a very real existential threat simply described as the enemy, who casts its (his?) gaze upon the women. However, this is not the only adversary threatening the women's livelihoods. Ignorance, apathy, complacency, and compulsion are all included in the woman's speech. The women who believe themselves to be safe, who pretend that nothing

happens, will come to represent those who avert their eyes from the sufferings of others as well as those who uphold a system of violence and oppression by allowing it to go unchallenged. The women said to be like Clara, who we will meet in the next scene, are the victims of the system's (the enemy's) attacks. They will represent the lifeline of the city. They are the labor force that allows the city to call itself 'La gran ciudad', or the great city, yet they must risk death and trauma to maintain their livelihood. The woman's final statement, 'somebody has to work' will become an indictment of the city's socioeconomic conditions as well as an expression of its economic dependence on the contributions of its women – the very class under attack by its continued disregard and corruption. In addition to its indictment of the current state of affairs, the woman's speech reveals an explicit interest in concealment. As expressed in her words, self-concealment is presented as a mechanism for self-preservation. This is not the extent of the play's concern with concealment, however, as the image of women concealing themselves under the city's sands will come to parallel that of corpses being concealed from the masses under the desert's landscape. Concealment will be portrayed throughout the play with a correlational tension, acting simultaneously as a protective resort for the marginalized as well as a tool for oppression and violence.

This prologue acts in unison with the adaptation's first scene, which situates us in a moment of ephemeral domestic quiet, soon broken by an incidence of violence. This first scene serves as a thematic anchor which attunes us to the reality of the city and its effects on its populace. We witness the story of a family of three women, sisters bound by sorority and a common struggle for survival. The scene introduces us to Isabel and Elena, two women who have decided to enter an underground shelter of the sort described in the prologue. The two hope to reunite with their sister, Clara, who has been missing for some time. We witness

the events of this scene from a temporally complex perspective. Isabel begins the scene by narrating, alone, and sets the ongoing action as something which occurred in the past. She speaks from a present tense reflecting on the past whenever she breaks from the action of the ongoing scene. At the same time, however, she participates as a member of the ongoing action in a time contemporaneous to the events she is narrating.

The scene's action sees the two sisters eating a bag of food that mysteriously appeared in their kitchen. They assume it was brought by Clara, who they believe may have entered a shelter. The women later hear a scream outside their home and choose to remain indoors. This moment and its aftermath are described as follows,

ISABEL: Maybe she decided to enter some shelter.

ELENA: And where might she be now?... (*Silence. A terrible howl is heard. Silence.*) Let's go see.

ISABEL: Stay seated! Those who wish to see are seen themselves (*silence.*) We did not try to see what had happened. We also did not continue eating. In silence, without looking at each other, we settled on sleeping. As I hung my clothes, I felt my heart being paralyzed, my sister Clara's work coat was hanging with the rest of the clothes (*to Elena*) Clara is not at the factory.

ELENA: Of course! She quit and they gave her severance, that is how she was able to buy food. Surely, she has also decided to stay in a shelter like us. Or maybe it is time to return to our town (*A second horrified scream is heard*). Who screams before our door?

ISABEL: Someone who is being tortured.

ELENA: We should go see.

ISABEL: Stay here! (*pauses*). And we did not go see what had happened. We spent the night without sleeping. As we waited for Clara, morning came... (De la Rosa 2004: 190).

This passage and its particular interest in sight and concealment are thematically important for the overall narrative of this play. We will continue to see that the language of sight and concealment is repeated throughout this adaptation as thematically linked to the discourse of power and violence. In this instance, the women choose to negate themselves the power of

sight for the sake of protecting their livelihoods via concealment.²⁵⁸ The proclamation “*los que quieren ver son vistos*”, or those who wish to see are seen themselves, encapsulates the power imbalance that will be presented via Antigone’s narrative in this adaptation. We will see that undoing concealment procures a heavy toll on those who do so, but we will likewise see that preserving concealment by turning a blind eye (in an almost literal sense) perpetuates a state of affairs with disastrous and increasingly costly consequences. In this scene, the sisters’ turn away from the events outside their household causes them a terrible pain. Their realization included here,

Elena! Elena, don’t go outside! Our sister is out there. Oh, how we deceived ourselves! She is there, her body massacred before our door!

ELENA (*She goes outside. Screams in terror. Enters, very shaken*): They killed her, they killed her! She was the one screaming for help. A knife, give me a knife to cut the rope with which they tied her. I am going to free her, I am going to bring her inside to warm her, to return life to her.

ISABEL: Give me that knife. Your efforts will be in vain. Our sister cannot revive. If they see us near her, we risk having the same fate.

ELENA: Let me. When they killed her, I did not take a single step. (De la Rosa 2004: 191).

This is a thematic precursor to the action of the play. We see two different reactions from the sisters. One recognizes her failing and immediately turns to recover the lifeless body of her sister. The other discourages this impulse, emphasizes their impotence, and remarks on the risks associated with action. Isabel’s discussion of futility immediately evokes images of Ismene which will be revisited as the play continues. While the women deliberate on their action and inaction, a man knocks on their door and asks about their association to the dead

²⁵⁸ The adaptation’s interest in sight and concealment is especially noteworthy when considering Antigone’s lineage as a daughter of Oedipus. Simon Goldhill’s ‘Blindness and Insight’ chapter from *Reading Greek Tragedy* (1986) is a helpful primer examining the language of sight, concealment, and knowledge/insight as well as their interrelations within Sophocles’ *Oedipus the King*.

woman on their doorstep. Given the thematic importance of the resulting events, I here present that passage in its entirety:

MAN: And who are you? This woman appeared murdered before your door. Do you recognize her?... What is she to you? The damn idiot disobeyed the security rules. Imagine that, going out to the streets alone, without a man.

ISABEL: No, we do not know her.

MAN: And that one? What is she doing with that knife?

Elena runs, the man follows after her. Isabel immediately closed the door. She has been left paralyzed. Just as she did not bring aid to the screams of the supposed stranger from the previous night, she also did not dare to go out and help Elena. Panic was her entire response. Now, behind the door and before the audience, she concludes her reconstruction of the transpired events.

ISABEL: I saw my sister Elena. To free our sister and to return life to her, would she go looking for death? Clara had only one wish: to live. (De la Rosa 2004: 191-92).

The final moments of this scene introduce the power imbalance of the world inhabited by these characters. In addition to the fear, anger, and impotence reflected in the words of Isabel and Elena, we see the reality of the danger constraining their very existence. The man speaks of security rules and blames Clara's death on her own deviation from their prescriptions. The economic reality presented via the language of hunger in Isabel and Elena's previous exchange suggests to us that Clara's excursions into the world were motivated purely by necessity.²⁵⁹ The oppressive atmosphere of this play is immediately established with the threat of violence and death depicted in this first scene. We will see that this atmosphere oppresses all citizens to a disheartening degree. Nevertheless, women, and especially economically disadvantaged women, are harmed and oppressed by the city's current order. The fear and threat introduced by this man's presence is endemic of the current system. It is a fear so strong that it shatters notions of sorority and causes Isabel to

²⁵⁹ Wright 2012 observes the development of a global movement against femicide and its contributing social factors which began in Cd. Juárez. Wright observes that the economic and labor conditions of the city (including poverty wages, inadequate transportation services, etc.) exacerbated the exploitation of working-class women and increased their vulnerability to violent crime.

wholly negate her relation to her deceased sister for the sake of self-preservation.²⁶⁰ All of these notions set the stage for Antigone's journey in this adaptation, and they will serve to explain her stance towards the city itself, her personal relationships, and her course of action as she opposes the city's oppressive ruling forces.

This scene plays out in truly Brechtian fashion and mirrors Brecht's use of the prologue in his adaptation of *Antigone*.²⁶¹ Just as Brecht's prologue transported his audience to Berlin, thus coloring his play with an evocation of the recent war, the images presented in De la Rosa's scene prime the audience to make certain connections with the ensuing drama. In contrast to Brecht, however, there are multiple scenes of this sort beyond the prologue, which will be interlaced with Antigone's story throughout the entirety of De la Rosa's adaptation.²⁶² The connections established by this prologue are thematic and lay the groundwork for the play's use of characterization and temporality. I will remark on these notions as they become relevant. Having established the importance of the play's beginning for the ensuing drama, we now turn to the story of Antigone herself.

Antigone's entrance on stage is brief but is presented as a standalone scene. It centers her interpretation of the city's condition while evoking the play's thematic concerns. It reads as follows,

²⁶⁰ As will be discussed below, this scene includes prescriptions and attitudes that are sadly reflected in Ciudad Juárez's response to femicide. The onus of death was placed on the vulnerable, and the powerful absolved themselves from responsibility.

²⁶¹ As mentioned in the introduction to this dissertation, Bertolt Brecht's *The Antigone of Sophocles* is fundamental for the reception of *Antigone* in Mexico and more widely in Latin America. Alongside Jean Anouilh's *Antigone*, Brecht's play acts as a source text for later adaptations, effectively displacing the ancient tragedy as a model and narrative launching pad in many instances. For more on this, see Mee and Foley 2011 and Pianacci 2015.

²⁶² De la Rosa's interwoven scenes act in a twofold manner. On the one hand, they interrupt the narrative action of Antigone's journey, thereby increasing the play's fictionality and producing an alienating effect. On the other hand, however, they ground the play in a social reality that mirrors and intensifies the city's current affairs and failings. De la Rosa's 'prologues' simultaneously alienate and refocus as they direct the audience to continuously face the city's realities without the reprieve of theatricality and the distance of fiction. For more on Brecht's alienation effect, see Tian 1997, Bai 1998, Silcox 2010.

Antigone appears carrying a luggage bag. It is her return to Ciudad Tebas.
ANTIGONE: Ah desolate city, the city of the moaning winds, of the merciless sun, of the dried-up rivers... the city who lost her voice. How many miseries are part of your legacy? Cry, cry endlessly because there is no justice for your dead, no funerary honors to embalm their memory (De la Rosa 2004: 192).

Importantly, Antigone's entrance is framed as a return to the city. The scene's title is 'El regreso de Antígona', or 'Antigone's Return'. Paired with the play's narrative, the title tells us that Antigone had left her city at some undetermined point in time. Perhaps more importantly, we see that her first words are a lament for her city and its current state. The city is anthropomorphized in Antigone's words and is simultaneously presented as a desolate landscape and a brutalized existence. The loss of voice attributed to the city will come to align itself with the helplessness of its most vulnerable populations and with the concerted effort to silence the lament of those who point out the city's failings. In line with what is often seen in adaptations of *Antigone*, this particular narrative does present a concern with burial rites and emphasizes them as primary and instrumental to the play's thematic and narrative. The object of burial is resituated, however, and even shifts within the play itself. This shift is largely a consequence of Creon's prohibitive edict and its obfuscating qualities, all of which constitute the subject of the following section.

Laying Blame – Creon, public women, and staying alive

Scene III sees Creon enter the stage in a strikingly combative fashion. His first words are an address to the citizenry of Ciudad Tebas, wherein Creon attempts to minimize grievances against his mandate and silence voices demanding justice for those killed and disappeared under his watch. The address works to characterize Creon as well as to present the deeply rooted problems that drive the play's plot. He speaks the following,

CREON: Let everyone know that God has wanted me to live in order to govern this city, sunken by its mistakes. The hate that intended to annihilate me did not subdue

me, on the contrary, it succumbs before my totality. Citizens, they have wanted my mandate to disappear, and they slander us to fill us with shame. They speak of deaths, hundreds of deaths; of the corpses of innocent women, lying with nothing more than the desert as their tombs. Lies! What deaths are they talking about? Citizens, those dark voices intend to demolish the great city we have built. They unsuccessfully intend to hinder our path to victory, without accounting for the sweat from every day of battle, fought so that there will always be a sunrise over this, the great city, raised by an army of men that work nonstop. (De la Rosa 2004: 191-93).

Creon's words strike at the core of the play's fundamental divisions. As a member of the ruling class, and the figure at its peak, Creon addresses the citizens of Ciudad Tebas with a speech meant to preserve the status quo and suppress challenges to his authority and mandate. In his address, we see a despotic attempt to fragment the citizenry by excluding from its composition any who would shine a light on aspects of the city that do not reflect Creon's preferred reality. Mentions of the city's darkness, its poor leadership, and its countless femicides are dismissed as slander. Beyond being suppressed, the voice of the marginalized and those most affected by the city's conditions is villainized in a manner that facilitates its exclusion. Furthermore, Creon defines the conditions of the city in gendered terms. The success of the city is attributed to men and their labor. Detractors of this claim would strip the men of their accomplishments in building such an industrious and economically productive city. This claim in particular reflects the conflicting perceptions of the city's true nature.

Creon's words of success and victory directly contradict the realities presented in the play's prologue. As stated in the prologue, it is the women of Ciudad Tebas who are fighting a war against an existential threat. This war is fought for survival, not the economic prosperity of the city. Nevertheless, they are compelled by necessity to venture out to the factories "because someone has to work" (De la Rosa 2004: 188). By recasting the success of the city as a result of a male victory through labor (expressed in bellicose terms), Creon is

dismissing the contributions of the women alongside the dangers they face. This is especially jarring considering that Tebas' model, Ciudad Juárez, has an overwhelmingly female workforce in its factories – a reality that De la Rosa's play appears to mirror and uphold in its worldbuilding.²⁶³

As Creon moves towards enacting an edict comparable to that of his ancient predecessor, his exclusionary tactics and his suppression become all the more pronounced. His proclamation is included in the following passage:

We cannot tolerate that the wounding voices of miserable, country-less women find an echo among well-intentioned people. We cannot allow them to turn us into hostages of lies and blackmail on account of their petty interests. From this highest position of responsibility [...] I declare that there are no dead women [...] They do not exist. And whoever dares contradict me is obliged to present evidence. Those tasked with seeing to our safety have been accused, brashly, of covering things up, and they have dared to single them out as perpetrators of grave crimes. Nothing can be more irresponsible. Those alien voices, filled with ungratefulness to our city, only seek to deprive us of progress and good fortune [...] No one should weep for those women in this city, who are merely the product of the fantasy of unscrupulous mercenaries. To those women I say, you are not from Tebas. And if they are to be faithful to this city, which generously received them like a mother, they must leave. Of course, women have passed away. It is also clear that Theban men have died. However, no more than is natural for any other city such as ours. For this reason, and you will agree with me on this, noble friends, in defense of the wellbeing and sovereignty of Tebas, I declare anyone who insists on damaging our image, thereby hurting our legitimate interests, as an enemy of the city. I repeat, they will be considered enemies of the state, and they will receive, as enemies, the full weight of the law (De la Rosa 2004: 193-194).

In this passage we see a more overt indictment of the city's marginalized. The women seeking justice for their disappeared are characterized as 'mercenaries' striving to derail the city's progress by damaging its reputation.²⁶⁴ Creon explicitly disenfranchises the marginalized and brutalized women of Ciudad Tebas by casting them as liars who fabricate

²⁶³ See Davidson 1992, Flores 2017, and Wright 2012.

²⁶⁴ As was the case in Olga Harmony's *La Ley de Creón*, the plight of the marginalized is weighed against economic interests and an arbitrary sense of progress by those of the ruling class. That which should damage a sanitized and capitalist image of success and stability is seen as detrimental to the status quo and either suppressed or oppressed in turn.

narratives of pain for the sake of attention. He politically exiles the women and attempts to codify their silence into law by declaring further outburst against his accepted version of events as acts of enmity against the state. In so doing, this Creon deviates from his ancient predecessor in a couple of important senses. In one sense, De la Rosa's Creon metaphorically inverts the actions and edict of the ancient Creon. He is concerned with maintaining bodies hidden and buried. His proclamation prohibits the uncovering of both bodies and truth, whereas his ancient model is concerned with exposing the body of Polynices. In a more literal sense, Creon is attempting to maintain the stability of one singular ideation of his city. However, and in contrast to the ancient Creon, his ideal construction of an ordered city is not represented or expressed in clear terms. We are left to surmise Creon's interests and find only a desire for power and its continuance as motivating forces for his proclamations. Creon's words and his denials serve to uphold the status quo which affords him his position and the power found therein.

The explicit denial of deaths and disappearances expressed above demonstrates Creon's attempts to preserve the city's established order at the expense of truth and the safety of his constituents. Creon speaks to absolve the city's guardians, the law enforcement arm of his government, from any charge of responsibility levied against them. According to Creon, there is no validity to the claims that crimes of severe magnitude are being committed in his city. Law enforcement operates as it should - investigating and prosecuting legitimate crimes and upholding justice and truth accordingly. The idea that these guardians would be accused of obfuscating the truth, let alone participating in the violence against the disappeared women in any capacity, is represented as absurd. Creon's action closely mirrors the sense of impunity with which the act of femicide is met in Mexico, and specifically in

the historic Ciudad Juárez at the time of this play's production.²⁶⁵ The two cities here become more deeply entangled. The public history and discourse of Ciudad Juárez become especially important as they will inform the development of Creon and his supporters' claims and characters.

There is a documented history of law enforcement failing to investigate and prosecute instances of femicide in Juárez. Furthermore, delegitimizing tactics have been used against victims in order to discredit their stories.²⁶⁶ This is likely done with purpose of protecting institutions and their credibility in the eyes of the masses. Unfortunately, such claims do infiltrate public discourse. As a result, the legitimacy of the women's concerns is put into question by the public at large, as are the character and morals of the disappeared. The occupations and lifestyles of disappeared women were, and continue to be, questioned with a level of scrutiny that is not equivalently directed at institutions of law enforcement and government. We will see that this is a trend propagated throughout Ciudad Tebas by the elite and their supporting institutions. As mentioned by Melissa W. Wright in her discussion of femicide and women in Northern Mexico, the victimized women of Ciudad Juárez and their advocates are criticized when they enter public spheres. In an intensely patriarchal society, they are often implicitly and explicitly equated to prostitutes regardless of their social and economic realities. Wright speaks of this phenomenon as that of the 'public woman'. When women enter public spheres, their life choices are laid out as main

²⁶⁵ Pantaleo 2010 analyzes the social construction of femicide in Ciudad Juárez by reviewing the language and thematic concerns of news media, human rights organizations, and academic articles. Pantaleo surmises that corruption in the criminal justice system and the consequent impunity with which it treats these crimes are a major contributor to their continuation. De la Rosa picks up on this trend and makes the authorities complicit in the city's downfall due to their apathy and corruption.

²⁶⁶ Meredith & Rodríguez Cortés 2017 gives an overview of the commodification and disposability of women in a factory economy. This piece remarks on the vulnerability of women as a result of a lack of protection from institutions who value their labor above their personhood. More specifically, it remarks on authorities' tendency to shift blames for their failures (or apathy) on to victims, who are then accused of living double lives wherein an immoral conduct has resulted in their death.

contributors to their victimization and even death.²⁶⁷ Creon adopts these mechanisms in his speech and uses them to blanketly discredit the accounts of victims, inquisitors, and any who would give credence to their words. This is best exemplified in Creon's words regarding the women who have been reported missing. Creon speaks the following,

Las mujeres reportadas como muertas están vivas. Y son bastante más vivas que nosotros. Esta tarde tuvimos noticias de tres de las reportadas como desaparecidas, se les ubicó en un balneario del mediterráneo (De la Rosa 2004: 194).²⁶⁸

The women reported as missing are alive. And they are much more lively/shrewd than we are. This afternoon we received news about three of the women reported missing. They were located in a spa in the Mediterranean.

In accordance with what we have discussed above, Creon is denying the existence of dead women and characterizing the would-be victims as galivanting women enjoying themselves in foreign baths.²⁶⁹ Beyond the absurdity of this claim from a logistical and economic standpoint, considering the local context of Ciudad Tebas/Juárez makes this characterization of the victims especially troubling.

Creon's use of the word '*vivas*' in this passage is loaded with meaning. In the most literal sense, he is claiming that the multitude of disappeared women are alive, and consequently any charge made against his government and its supporting institutions is superfluous and slanderous. Beyond its meaning of alive, '*vivas*' holds a couple of more localized meanings which complicate our understanding of this passage. In this context, '*vivas*' could more closely be represented in English as shrewd or cunning. The meaning of

²⁶⁷ Wright 2006. This language allows patriarchy to maintain its power through the discreditation and disenfranchisement of women.

²⁶⁸ Weiner 2015 reads Anouilh's *Antigone* as an intertext in this passage due to its militaristic language and its characterization of the missing women as mercenaries. My interest here lies in the language Creon uses, its callous characterization, and its possible resonance within a hyper-localized context.

²⁶⁹ Weiner 2015 aptly notes that the women in question are maquila workers and not, as Creon says, of an economic class capable of traveling for leisure on a whim. If the number of reported women corresponds to the sheer volume of corpses later depicted in the city's morgue, this claim becomes all the more ridiculous.

the word also denotes experience in some contexts, which are likely operating in this passage as well. When someone is ‘vivo/a/x’, it is inferred that they are cunning individuals with street smarts born from experience. Such a connotation quickly devolves into associations with less than legitimate activities, which feeds back into the idea of the ‘public woman’ presented by Wright. Creon is characterizing the missing women in a manner that would tarnish their image for a sexually conservative society, thereby facilitating their apathy. These valances of the word are regional but extend throughout Northern Mexico.²⁷⁰ There is, however, one more possible reading of this passage that would be intelligible only to the people of Ciudad Juárez.

The early 2000s saw some concerted efforts, movements, and campaigns revolving around the problem of femicide in Ciudad Juárez. For example, the activist movement ‘Ni una más’, ‘Not a single one more’, seeks the implementation of strategies to stop femicide as well as the proper investigation of crimes already committed.²⁷¹ This campaign operates internationally and domestically, and it is led by activists invested in seeking justice for the victims of femicide. On the other hand, campaigns with more problematic rollouts and intentions were also unveiled in response to a societal problem that could no longer be ignored. In 2002, a media campaign titled ‘¡Ponte Viva!’, part of a larger campaign titled ‘Cuida tu vida’ (Care for your life), was rolled out throughout the city.²⁷² The campaign consisted of catchy slogans and television ads which pushed for women-centered self-defense as a viable response to gender violence and femicide. The campaign was funded by upper class citizens of Ciudad Juárez as well as local television and political entities.²⁷³ TV

²⁷⁰ Comparable words for other regions exist throughout Mexico. All of these valances and variations are derived from slang which makes citing their usage a challenging task.

²⁷¹ Wright 2006.

²⁷² ‘Ponte viva’ best translates to something like stay alert in this context, and ‘cuida tu vida’ means ‘care for your life’ (‘take care of yourself’).

²⁷³ Villamil 2003.

spots played during commercial breaks would show a young woman giving ‘safety tips’ instructing women to walk against the flow of traffic, walk accompanied by others, stay alert, strike potential aggressors in the groin area, etc. Spots would end with the young woman singing the phrase ‘ponte viva’ to the tune of Shakira’s *Whenever, Wherever*.²⁷⁴

This campaign was criticized for being tone deaf by sections of the written press and the population and for essentially patching a gun wound with a band-aid. Journalist Jenaro Villami, for example, noted that the campaign did not acknowledge the state and the maquiladoras’ shared responsibility in facilitating femicide. Likewise, journalist Rafael Maya criticized the campaign’s use of misogynist stereotypes and argued that the very things represented in this campaign fueled the ideologies that led to femicide and gender violence.²⁷⁵ In its clumsy presentation, the campaign made one thing very clear – the women of Ciudad Juárez had been made responsible for their own safety.²⁷⁶ Labor and social realities were not questioned widely, and thus the onus of self-preservation fell on the vulnerable.²⁷⁷ In this context, the phrase ‘ponte viva’ becomes especially important. It plays with the valances of alertness and shrewdness found in the word ‘viva’ and pairs it with the existential meaning of the word. Linguistically, it is an isolating proposition– a command in the singular directed at a woman, not women, tasking her to stay alert in order to stay alive. It absolves institutions from their responsibilities and disengages from notions of solidarity

²⁷⁴ Unfortunately, I have found no surviving video of this spot, so we are here relying on my memory. I remember watching these spots in Ciudad Juárez. They formed part of the evening programming of commercials for channels 56 and 44, which at the time were two of the city’s local stations. These videos are not accessible via YouTube or any archive I have been able to discover.

²⁷⁵ Maya 2003.

²⁷⁶ In the second phase of its rollout, the campaign’s communication presented the message ‘si no hay quién te cuide en esta ciudad, cuídate tú sola’, ‘if there is now one to care for you in this city, take care of yourself’. See La Redacción 2003.

²⁷⁷ Again, Pantaleo 2010 sees a thematic awareness of the systemic problems which created the conditions for femicide, but her analysis highlights the fact that these critiques came largely from academics and human rights groups. Of the newspaper corpus surveyed for her analysis, no newspapers use the language of femicide, they fail to report the killings of women as a social problem, and they make no links between femicide and maquiladoras or labor and economic conditions.

or collective resistance. It accepts the isolation of the city's working women and takes it as a given and unchanging condition. This context makes Creon's words all the more sinister. He is taking a phrase with local resonance and weaponizing it against the victims of violent murders. Beyond discrediting their moral characters, he groups them together jovially at a bath in the Mediterranean, a stark contrast to the realities most likely faced by the women in their final moments – isolation and terror.

The final moments of this scene see Creon turning to his attendants to discuss solutions for the problems created by the violent femicides of the city. We learn in the ensuing discussion that Creon is aware of the accumulating bodies but is nevertheless driven to deny their existence. The following exchange between Creon and his attendants allows us to peak behind the curtain of public discourse and into the mechanisms of suppression used by Creon's government.

ADVISER: Sir, I am not here to contradict you, but this order seems a bit extreme.

CREON: What else can I do? Those corpses are in such a state that it is impossible to identify them. Why cause any more tears?

ADVISER: The voices of the unsatisfied in the city are increasing day by day. The women are only asking for justice. It seems to me that we need to do something, I don't know, give them something, some...satisfaction...

CREON: Justice! Swindlers. We all know what they want. They will have a bit of what they have never had. That way we will see the price of their pain.

ADVISER: Let's see, you, Victor, make something up, anything (*to the others*), you all get creative, that is what I pay you for, to give me solutions, not problems...

VICTOR: Sir, it's just that...Tebas is crumbling, the news about our situation is already running in other cities, we should not allow such a commotion to be made. This whole situation, though it is of course exaggerated, is damaging to our honor and sinks us in disrepute. (De la Rosa 2004: 194-95).

Contradictorily, Creon's wish to prevent more tears is followed by a dismissal of women seeking justice.²⁷⁸ Creon's words reveal an awareness of the city's true conditions, but this awareness is coupled with concerted efforts to present a different reality. Ciudad Tebas is

²⁷⁸ The word I have here translated as swindlers is given as 'estafadoras' in the Spanish. It is distinctly gendered feminine.

upheld as a symbol of prosperity and progress. The realities of violence and death threaten to undermine this façade, and as such, they must be suppressed. When Creon's acolyte, Victor, mentions the crumbling of the city, this is couched in terms of international attention, effectively making Tebas part of a geopolitical ecosystem and making its appearance a matter of international interest. The notions of justice and safety for its citizens are of no concern to these men. They are instead preoccupied with the preservation of the city's reputation as it upholds the status quo and their own power. The end of this scene further demonstrates the condition of Tebas' women. They receive no empathy and no support from the institutions meant to protect them. In regard to their survival and safety, the women of Ciudad Tebas are alone.

The sense of isolation represented above seeps its way into the construction of women in De la Rosa's play. The scenes which immediately follow Creon's speech present us with varied accounts of womanhood within the city's hostile reality. We will see that the threat of death and violence is compounded upon divisions of class and gender in a manner that discourages solidarity and promotes apathy and detachment.

Womanhood in the City of Death

Scene V represents the incursion of class dynamics into the play's politics in the most striking way. As such, I wish to examine it first. The scene titled, 'Eurydice in public defense of Creon' sees Creon's wife and son, Eurydice and Haemon, interviewed by the press. The notes for this scene set up a few dynamics that will complicate its development. Eurydice and Haemon are attempting to enter a religious service in memory of eight recently uncovered bodies. The bodies in question were found in such a state that made them unidentifiable. Eurydice and Haemon were turned away by the mother of a victim, and the press intercepted them as they were leaving. The scene begins with the heart-wrenching

pleas of a woman who questions Eurydice's presence. She directly implicates Eurydice, her husband, and everything they represent in the death of her daughter. Here we see the exchange between the two,

WOMAN 2: How dare you show your face here? We want nothing from you... I only need my daughter, give her back... someone to listen to my pleas... if you cannot return her to me alive, there is no solace you can possibly give me.

EURYDICE: Ma'am, we cannot guarantee that any of the women is your daughter. I ask that you not suffer in vain. At the moment, none of the women have been identified. Look, I promise you that my husband will not rest until he finds her. I am sure that she is alive, as are many of the girls who have already been found.

WOMAN 2: Lies! You deceive us. You have her... please return her to me. Murderers, you are a bunch of murderers. (De la Rosa 2004: 202).

The woman's words set the stage for an impromptu press conference in which Eurydice will affirm and enact many of the divisions and behaviors laid out in her husband's previous speech. Eurydice's response to the woman's words attempts to sidestep the blame laid at her and her husband's feet. She claims it is natural for someone in her situation to lash out and seek to cast blame and proceeds to tell the press that it is necessary to approach these suffering families with compassion. When a reporter questions her about her husband's edict and the lack of compassion it displays, Eurydice is shown ignorant of her husband's new decree. Nevertheless, we see her fall in line with her husband's previous rhetoric. The exchange is as follows:

REPORTER: Then why is the existence of discovered bodies being denied? There is word of over 200 corpses held in the morgue. Why are those responsible not punished?

EURYDICE: The morgue is empty, but I do not wish to fall for provocations... If you were, as I have been, witnesses to the great efforts he has made to bring safety and security to this city... Those women, the few who have been effectively found, they lived at risk...they led double lives...they would have died in this city or in any other...But their lives are not being put on trial. Justice has been made on their behalf. The criminals have been apprehended. The majority of cases have already been resolved (De la Rosa 2004: 203-204).

The context of Eurydice's speech, a memorial service for victims of femicide, undercuts her claims and makes her appear tone-deaf at best. It is clear that Eurydice is not privy to the full reality of the situation. She knew nothing of Creon's edict. She likely believes that the morgue is actually empty and presents that notion in an attempt to appease the reporters and suffering families. Nevertheless, in her defense of her husband, she turns to undermine victims of violence and their suffering by questioning their moral character and suggesting that their deaths were their own fault. Although she states that the women's lives should not be put on trial, the words that preface her statement do exactly that. By stating that the women would have died in any city, Eurydice demonstrates the class divisions operating in this play.

The fact that a woman has adopted and applied the same rhetoric of blame that has already been weaponized against victims from an authoritative and legislative standpoint very clearly indicates the existence of different realities facing the women of Ciudad Tebas. Regardless of her misguided attempts to the contrary, it is impossible for Eurydice to grieve with the victims of femicide. When the grieving mother bars her from entering the memorial service, she is excluding her from a social space. Eurydice is aligned with the same powers that have enabled and preserve Tebas' current condition. The grieving mother observes this allegiance in her accusations. For her, Eurydice, Creon, and everyone in their social strata are as culpable of murder as those carrying out the physical act. Eurydice upholds this distinction by speaking of victims as women living double lives and exhibiting risky behaviors. Although she delineates her distinction with moralistic language, the line dividing the women in this scene is intelligible as one dictated by class. This becomes especially apparent in Eurydice's retort to a journalist who mentions that young girls have also been victims of femicide. The exchange reads as follows:

JOURNALIST: Ma'am, for ten years multiple girls have also been found murdered, and to this day no justice made on their behalf.

EURYDICE: We also need to accept that us women have failed... (*The journalist wishes to speak*). Forgive me young lady, but those girls lived in neglect...it is obvious that they did not have responsible mothers.

JOURNALIST: So, do you believe the mothers are responsible for this situation?

EURYDICE: No. I mean... I just want to ask that we all collaborate. That is to say that we all care for ourselves responsibly. Let's take care of our children. Let's take care of ourselves. Let's care not to walk the streets alone...

JOURNALIST: Ma'am, you live in a city full of women who are alone. Are you asking them not to go out to work? How will they live? They are poor women...

EURYDICE: Precisely, because many families have been affected, and I am referring to all of those who have lost their jobs. We need to be responsible in our treatment of these issues. We must not forget that the eyes of the world are tuned in to whatever happens in Tebas. Neither should we forget that we face unfair competition from other cities that are magnifying this situation... (De la Rosa 2004: 204).

The journalist is aware of the holes in Eurydice's arguments and consequently steers her towards confronting the flaws in her reasoning. Nevertheless, Eurydice doubles down and blames the deaths of young girls, for whom the arguments of sexual impropriety will not work, on their mothers. Again, she attempts to color her accusations with a moralistic language couched in ideas of responsibility. She makes the women of Ciudad Tebas responsible for the violent deaths in question either as a result of their sexual impropriety and risky behaviors, or due to their collective failures as mothers and providers. When the journalist correctly points out that the women represented in Eurydice's words are poor and cannot abide by the arbitrary guidelines she presents, Eurydice's arguments take a bizarre turn towards the economic. In her view, the city is suffering due to the negative attention drawn to it because of allegations of violence. This is curiously expressed with the language of sight. The gaze of the state is averted elsewhere and focuses on external attention while its own citizens are ignored and suppressed. As a representative of the state and its forces, Eurydice appears to consider that preserving the status quo is more important than the death and suffering affecting the citizens of Ciudad Tebas.

Eurydice's concern with an external and globalized gaze is an element at the core of the state's suppression of femicide. This point has already been touched upon in Victor's discussion with Creon in Scene III. As I will state in this chapter's conclusion, efforts to downplay and suppress news related to femicide and its realities continue to be a problem in Mexico, and the external gaze is typically at the center of this concern and the state's corresponding actions. It is important to understand that Ciudad Tebas is not a city in a vacuum. In this regard, my argument runs contrary to Weiner 2015's assertion that Tebas is a city represented in a geopolitical void.²⁷⁹ While the play does not establish an elaborate geography or directly discuss the influence of foreign parties in Tebas' troubled existence, the repeated concern with a foreign gaze and the representation of cities external to Tebas (primarily through Antigone's return and final departure, the burial of a femicide victim in a foreign land in Scene VIII, and the repeated anxieties concerning foreign intervention and attention from within Creon's inner circle, particularly in Scene XVI) make it so that we cannot interpret Tebas in a vacuum. Doing so runs the risk of misunderstanding femicide as a distinctly Theban, and thereby 'Juarensé' problem instead of an endemic societal failing enabled by a multivariance of factors. Though likely its primary focus, I do not agree that this play is solely a critique of Ciudad Tebas/Juárez failed state and their complicity to violence.²⁸⁰ The play will endeavor to show us that the city, although powerful, is only representative of a much larger problem which marginalizes and victimizes entire populations. Eurydice's concern suggests that the structures of power present in Tebas are at some level susceptible to foreign influence. Negative attention therefore becomes a threat to the established order and must be suppressed at all costs.

²⁷⁹ See Weiner 2015.

²⁸⁰ As we move to the conclusion, I will argue for this play's foresightedness and its critique of the societal failings that can coalesce to marginalize and undermine when left unchecked and unresisted.

In pursuit of maintaining the city's established order, Eurydice speaks of collective responsibility and advocates for collaborative effort. Nevertheless, Eurydice's words decidedly endeavor to turn responsibility away from the establishment she represents and onto the backs of the marginalized. Like the tone-deaf media campaigns of Ciudad Juárez, Eurydice is making those victimized by violence responsible for their own wellbeing and releasing the systemic forces meant to protect them from all responsibility. She reveals that the state stands to protect economic interests. These interests are affected by negative press and external perspectives. The realities of women suffering under the sands of Tebas are of little concern to Eurydice and those of her class. The emphasis on economics and the disconnect between the realities of the oppressed and the elite are too stark a contrast for any solidarity to exist between the classes represented. This entire scene sees the failure of empathy to manifest even from one who should presumably be in a position to understand the suffering of the marginalized. Eurydice is a woman and a mother (she attends the memorial service accompanied by her son, Haemon). However, the disparities of class disallow her from concretizing a sense of empathy that would lead to solidarity and change. Instead, Eurydice sides with the establishment to the detriment of the people. A similar failure to create solidarity is represented in another scene, in which Antigone comes face to face with her sister Ismene.

Scene IV, titled 'Taking a stand. The arguments of Antigone and those of Ismene', stages an increasingly desperate debate between Antigone and her sister. Antigone is seen scouring the desert for any signs of her sister, Polinice. She is accompanied by others who are likewise searching the desert for the bodies of femicide victims. Ismene enters on stage as someone external to this search party. She has come to speak to Antigone but wastes no time before antagonizing her sister. The first exchange between the two reads as follows"

ISMENE: Are you sick? Ever since you first arrived you do not sleep; you do not eat... You cannot keep going like this. This is madness!

ANTIGONE: Madness is that which has sunken us in misery, both you and me and every other woman on this land. Madness is that which those who still find refuge in sleep possess (De la Rosa 2004: 196).

Ismene's words are reminiscent of a dynamic previously explored in Olga Harmony's *La Ley de Creón*. As is the case in that place, the language of malady and madness coalesce to critique the character of Antigone and her atypical behavior.²⁸¹ In contrast to Harmony's Antigone character, however, De la Rosa's Antigone here turns the accusation of madness onto Ismene and a subset of the people of Ciudad Tebas. Antigone denounces the current state of the city and categorizes it as a widespread madness which creates misery for its women in particular. It is not the women who are mad, it is the world they inhabit which has been turned upside down. Given the situation pressing the city, Antigone's words proceed to admonish those who are complacent, apathetic, or conforming to the city's violent reality. In her view, the charge of madness is most applicable to these people. This exchange sets up the ensuing rift between Antigone and Ismene.

As the scene progresses, the divisions between the two sisters become more and more pronounced. The sisters appear to be diametrically opposed on just about every issue stemming from the city's violence. Antigone's steadfast desire to search for her sister is contrasted by Ismene's suggestion to let her go. Likewise, their thoughts on virtue, death, and life all find themselves at odds. Ismene is characterized as Antigone's foil. This is not atypical of adaptations in which the two sisters appear, but as we will see, De la Rosa seems to intensify the rift between the two to critique certain aspects of the city's citizenry and its problems.

²⁸¹ As discussed in the chapter on *La Ley de Creón*, the reception of Sophocles' *Antigone* is steeped in a history of pathologizing young women who oppose or resist oppressive forces.

Ismene embodies many of the anxieties felt by the citizens of Ciudad Tebas. She shows apprehension when witnessing Antigone's actions and singular resolve. She sees no hope or solace in the act of finding Polinice, and she fears for her and her sister's safety should they attempt the task. To put it simply, she lives in fear. This fear is completely rational given the city's present condition. However, the manner in which this fear manifests presents us with a fuller picture of the sisters' history and the ideological troubles afflicting the people of Ciudad Tebas. It is through Ismene that we learn of Antigone's stance and motivations in searching for Polinice. Antigone reveals that she needs the certainty of Polinice's death. Though she does not appear to have many hopes of finding her sister alive, she states that her corpse would at least let her know that she is no longer suffering. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, Antigone seeks justice for her disappeared sister. She says as much in the passage below,

ANTIGONE: I need certainty... anything, even that brought by her corpse. And what is more, I need the face of the culprit, those murderous hands. Justice has fled from this place, and we all need justice (De la Rosa 2004: 196).

Antigone's desires are simple enough to understand, but her priorities are recontextualized when met with Ismene's retort.

ISMENE: We need life. If Polinice is alive, she will decide when to return. After all, she always did as she pleased, and she would not be the first... (De la Rosa 2004: 196).

In responding to Antigone's words, Ismene divests from Polinice's search. She prioritizes her own life over not only the search of her sister but the notion of justice itself. For Ismene, survival is paramount, and her sister's noble aspirations will not convince her otherwise. Were this not divisive enough a position, the divergence in the sisters' priorities is exacerbated by Ismene's later words. In stating that Polinice did as she pleased, Ismene is

shifting any responsibility for her fate onto Polinice herself. This stance is reminiscent of the arguments deployed by Creon and Eurydice but is especially jarring given the blood relation between daughters of Oedipus. De la Rosa's play explains the stark contrast between Ismene and Antigone by inviting us to reflect upon their upbringing and environment. As the conversation between the two continues, we see that Ismene's position is truly born of fear – a fear that allows no respite and seeks to cast blame in its search for self-preservation.

The ending of Ismene's statement elicits a response from Antigone, and it is here that we get a glimpse of the family's troubled history.

ANTIGONE: What are you trying to say?

ISMENE: Precisely that. That for you all, for my father, for you, it was always so easy to leave. After all, Ismene would stay in Tebas, waiting for you. Caring for little Polinice, maintaining the house, and keeping you updated on how everything was going. And nothing was happening. Off in the distance your myth only grew, as did your absence.

ANTIGONE: I had to leave, at the risk of losing it all. I could not choose to be anyone other than who I am (De la Rosa 2004: 197-98).

Ismene's grievances against her family are illustrative of a very specific and consequential narrative choice of De la Rosa's play. Though we knew Antigone had left Tebas given her marked return a few scenes back, Ismene's words suggest that her absence was prolonged. The mention of her father in this context is especially important. Ismene draws a direct comparison between the character and personalities of Oedipus and Antigone. De la Rosa's play here appears to be drawing from the Sophoclean tradition of the myth beyond Sophocles' *Antigone*. This passage marks *Oedipus at Colonus* as a relevant intertext for the backstory of De la Rosa's Antigone character, and the scene at large incorporates elements from *Oedipus the King* in a similar manner.

Though this is not fully fleshed out in the narrative, it is strongly suggested that Antigone experienced a period of travel or exile alongside her father. Ismene's words reveal

that she alone was a constant presence in Tebas while her father and sister were absent. Ismene does not explicitly tell us that the two were travelling together, but her wording makes this highly likely. Ismene uses the plural '*esperándolos*' when stating that she would await the return of the travelers while tending to the home. She speaks to the fact that Antigone's myth was growing alongside her distance from home. I would argue that Ismene's words here provide us with a productive picture of Antigone's upbringing and one that can serve to explain the stark contrast between the two characters.

Antigone is a character shaped by her wanderings alongside a king, albeit one stripped of his power. Taking a cue from *Oedipus at Colonus*, De la Rosa's adaptation places Antigone alongside Oedipus in his long exile from Thebes/Tebas. This experience is formative for Antigone. It informs her worldview and shapes her character. Ismene practically says as much as she confronts her sister.

ISMENE: We knew nothing about you, and you had no news about us. Now you come back to question me, to blame me for what happened?

ANTIGONE: No one is blaming you...

ISMENE: Yes, you are. Your gaze, your obsession, your impatience. Why can we not wait for things to clear up. This is much bigger than we are. There is too much darkness. But you are fixated on finding truths. Who knows whether we can even endure the truth... You just had to return to stir everything up, to display your courage (De la Rosa 2004: 198).

Ismene speaks with a sense of resentment as she finds fault with her sister's singlemindedness and its impact on their family. Though angry, Ismene's words demonstrate the intricacies imbued into the play's use of characterization. Through Ismene, the play delves into the myth of Oedipus and uses it to build Antigone's character. Antigone is described as obsessive and impatient in a manner that mirrors her father's legendary character. The language of sight, darkness, truth, and Ismene's musings about the burden of

truth all point to the tragic tale of Oedipus and his single-minded pursuit of truth.²⁸²

Combined with Ismene's mention of courage, this passage presents us with an Antigone shaped by a royal character who possesses an unshakeable demeanor and the characteristic stubbornness of an epic hero.²⁸³ Were this not enough to establish a parallel between Antigone and Oedipus, Ismene says the following,

ISMENE: How I detest your extreme arrogance. To believe that you can defy destiny, defy us all, put us to the test... Antigone, the one with great clarity, the one with a duty, the one who sacrifices everything for a single truth, the one who can detach herself even from what she loves most (De la Rosa 2004: 198).

This passage and its emphasis on fate and truth cement and strengthen the link between Antigone and Oedipus. The destiny defining drive of the two is brought to the forefront along with their relentless pursuit of truth. Antigone has taken after her father as a result of their time together. She sees the world from a perspective informed by travel. Her experience is extremely atypical. Although dispossessed, she is presented as a virtuous and powerful figure with a sense of clarity and duty. By contrast, Ismene is excluded from the exilic experience and left in Tebas for an extended period of time. She is consequently shaped by the fear of violence and death that plagues the city and develops characteristics that are highly divergent from those of her father and sister.

Like Antigone, Ismene's characterization is largely given by her sister. Antigone speaks the following in response to Ismene's criticisms,

²⁸² Tiresias speaks of truth's heavy burden in Soph. *OT*. 316-18. Iocasta attempts to persuade Oedipus to give up his search for the truth about his parentage in Soph. *OT*. 1064-1072 fearing the weight of its unveiling. Oedipus nevertheless presses on in a single-minded manner (ed. by R. D. Dawe).

²⁸³ Apfel 2011 discusses the extreme nature of Sophoclean heroes and their intelligibility via Homeric monisms and the heroic code. De la Rosa's play seems to adopt these heroic attributes in its characterization of its Antigone. The invitations to read Antigone (the character) through the lens of a hero like Oedipus are present and marked in a way that highlight Antigone's heroic demeanor and the single-minded ideology which fuels it.

ANTIGONE: You speak from fear. They have terrorized you. Now you look out only for yourself. Is that how you plan to save yourself? You think that if you are silent, they will not come for you. No one can claim the sacred name of the law as their own, not as long as the sacred right to life is the sweet bond that ties us. No one saves themselves by themselves (De la Rosa 2004: 198).

Antigone diagnoses her sister's condition as one born of fear. The city and its disastrous administration have created a constant environment of death and violence which has influenced Ismene's behavior. By prefacing her question to Ismene with the temporal marker '*ahora*', now, it is clear that Antigone perceives Ismene's behavior and words as something new and different. In contrast, Ismene's use of temporality marks Antigone's convictions as persistent and unchanging. Though brief, this passage goes a long way towards displaying the sisters' contrasting existence. It likewise establishes a parallel with the play's first scene by presenting a sister motivated to action and one paralyzed by fear.

Ismene is deployed in this adaptation as a foil to Antigone, but her fear and surrender to institutions larger than herself are intensified to a significant degree. In Sophocles' *Antigone* Ismene speaks of the futility of action as a result of gender constraints. She says,

ἀλλ' ἐννοεῖν χρὴ τοῦτο μὲν γυναῖχ' ὅτι
ἔφουμεν, ὡς πρὸς ἄνδρας οὐ μαχομένα·
ἔπειτα δ' οὐνεκ' ἀρχόμεσθ' ἐκ κρεισσόνων
καὶ ταῦτ' ἀκούειν κάτι τῶνδ' ἀλγίονα.
ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν αἰτοῦσα τοὺς ὑπὸ χθονὸς
ξύγγνοιαν ἴσχειν, ὡς βιάζομαι τάδε,
τοῖς ἐν τέλει βεβῶσι πείσομαι. τὸ γὰρ
περισσὰ πράσσειν οὐκ ἔχει νοῦν οὐδένα (Soph. *Ant.* 61-68).

But, we must remember that we are women, who cannot fight against men, and then that we are ruled by those whose power is greater, so that we must consent to this and to other things even more painful! So I shall beg those beneath the earth to be understanding, since I act under constraint, but I shall obey those in authority; for there is no sense in actions that exceed our powers.

De la Rosa's Ismene speaks words that directly mirror those of her ancient model but prefaces them with a couple of more fatalistic arguments meant to dissuade Antigone from her search. The relevant passages read thus,

ISMENE: I am not so sure that acting of our own accord is the best option. Look at other families, facing the unmendable, they do much by simply obeying. Creon has ordered that for the good of the city we are no longer to speak of homicides (De la Rosa 2004: 199).

ISMENE: Have you not understood the decree? Leave her alone! If she is dead, then it will be worthless for you to risk meeting the same fate. It is better to forget. This will pass ... (De la Rosa 2004: 200).

ISMENE: Keep in mind that we are women: we cannot fight against the men. Our weak powers force us to obey, in order not to suffer, I follow whoever is in power... (De la Rosa 2004: 201)

Ismene's character is presented as cowardly and hesitant in contrast to Antigone's determined and continued struggle. The play is not particularly forgiving of Ismene's demeanor and points to it as representative of some of the problems facing the city. Ismene has allowed fear to dictate her conduct and consequently turns a blind eye even to her sister's death. This response is understandable given the city's traumatic history. However, when contrasted to Antigone and her elevated character, Ismene appears to fall short of the heroic mark set for children of Thebes' royal family. When Antigone finally requests her help in infiltrating the city's morgue to search for their sister, Ismene refuses. An abridged version of their exchange is found below,

ANTIGONE: Do my loyalty, my love, my pain, this desperate search for justice mean nothing to you?

ISMENE: You will not rest until you manage to provoke that we also end up lying on the sand [...] Forget everything, let's go far away from here. Life is always stronger...

ANTIGONE: You want me to forget the past. You want to flee from here, to find peace in another place; but these crimes have marked us forever... Many have died under the tyrant's complicity. They have appeared torn apart with no better a tomb than this desert [...] Because the God of justice does not favor everyone equally.

[...]

ANTIGONE: I will not insist. Follow the one in power and do what he orders. I, on the other hand, promise you that I will give my sister the peaceful rest of a proper burial [...]

ISMENE: The salt borne from tears is not eternal. And neither will they flow eternally down people's cheeks. The edge of a blade can bring joy to the dying...

ANTIGONE: Perhaps blood of your blood still lies on the desert or in the morgue, but that is already a matter of the past.

ISMENE: I simply do not have the courage anymore.

ANTIGONE: On the day when you do find it, there will be no sisterly arms to welcome you. This struggle is not yours. You have said as much (De la Rosa 2004: 200-02).

As the discussion between the sisters draws to a close, it is clear that their perspectives and priorities are incompatible. Ismene is concerned with survival above all else. The death of her sister is tragic but does not merit that she expose herself to a similar fate. Antigone's rebuke of Creon and her language of virtue and duty (both familial and civic) fail to move Ismene. Ismene cannot reconcile Antigone's idealism with the brutal realities of the city. She wishes only to survive and is willing to forgo and forget her missing sister for that possibility. Antigone, on the other hand and much like her ancient predecessor, holds ideas of justice and familial piety above mortal law and life itself. She wishes to provide burial to her sister in order honor her life and legacy. Ismene's lack of courage to accomplish this task alongside her sister disallows any form of solidarity from forming between the two.

In constructing a kinder reading of Ismene, it is possible to interpret her will to survive in such a broken system as an act of courage in and of itself. Surviving in tyranny is in many ways its own act of resistance. However, it is difficult to determine whether the ethical friction born from the sisters' discussion allows much room for such an interpretation given the play's framing. De la Rosa further complicates an emotional tension already

present between the Sophoclean figures of Antigone and Ismene by highlighting instances of complacency as moral failings which elicit regret. The resonance between this scene and Scene I's presentation of Elena and Isabel colors our interpretation of Ismene to a significant degree. The similarities between the names of Isabel and Ismene direct us to associate the characters.²⁸⁴ An association between Antigone and Elena then follows. Antigone and Elena are both presented as straightforward and firm in their actions and remain unburdened by the same fears and regrets afflicting Ismene and Isabel. Despite this characterization, however, it is important to consider that Ismene is a victim of a stifling and potentially deadly environment. Her hesitation is warranted, as is her desire to live despite great suffering. Consequently, Ismene continues to be a relatable character for the audience. In characterizing the paralyzing effects of fear and violence, she can also be seen as directing us to reflect on our own inaction in moments of great crisis.

Ismene's failure and ultimate lack of courage signal a thematic concern with complacency, submission, and civic apathy. As this scene stages a stark contrast between the two sisters and their ideologies, it directs us to question our own behavior in times of crisis. The use of language throughout the scene champions Antigone's demeanor and chastises Ismene's inaction. Ismene, who received an upbringing similar to Antigone and shares heroic blood, lacks the fundamental drive to do what is right exhibited by her sister. While Antigone becomes a model of courage within an environment of darkness and oppression, Ismene reminds us of our collective failure to manifest said values into action. She chooses to live a reduced and oppressed existence divorced from her foundational values for sake of surviving. This is clearly a trauma response caused by the city's circumstances. Nevertheless, this response sets Ismene as negative foil for Antigone, even if this is done

²⁸⁴ The Ismene character in Olga Harmony's *Antigone* is named Isabel. Whether this is an intentional callback from the author, or a coincidence born from limited name pools is unclear.

unkindly. De la Rosa's Ismene departs from the traditional model by outright refusing her sister with no hint or hope of future reconciliation. In this iteration, Ismene submits completely to the structures of male power and oppression. She does not hope or wish to share either of her sisters' fates, and in the end, she refuses to do what is right for the sake of self-preservation.²⁸⁵ She does not possess the sororal devotion of the ancient Ismene and therefore allows Antigone to sever the sororal bonds between them.

In addition to demonstrating the city's deeply entrenched fear and its ability to stifle blood relations and solidarity, this scene reveals Antigone's commitment to her sister Polinice and the reasoning behind her fixation with burial. Antigone clearly states her objective and the sacrifices she is willing to make to see it accomplished. She says,

ANTIGONE: We have to look for Polinice in the morgue. We have to find her. And if she is dead, we must live her death. Honor her memory. It is human to give her proper burial rites. We must force Creon to recognize these crimes. Don't you realize? Denying their deaths also denies their lives.

[...]

(to Ismene) I will not insist. Follow the one in power and do what he orders. I, on the other hand, promise you that I will give my sister the peaceful rest of a proper burial. What do I care if I die? I will be at ease beside those who rest in peace. Creon has the power. A thousand times over, I would prefer to please those who lie below than those who stand above. For it is below that I will dwell forever (De la Rosa 2004: 200-01).

Antigone expresses an investment in life and death that initially appears to be almost contradictory. Like her ancient model, she mentions her desire to please the dead rather than the living given the fleeting nature of life and its brevity relative to death.²⁸⁶ However, the text does not suggest that this prioritization of the dead is rooted in the belief in an extended afterlife or the preeminence of divine law over mortal dictates per se. This Antigone's

²⁸⁵ Mills argues that the Ismene character in Sophocles' *Antigone* wavers in her commitment to the good but decides to do what is right, that is to say standing by her sister and stating she will share her fate, out of devotion for her sister (See Mills 1986). De la Rosa's Ismene appears to have lost this devotion as her actions are continuously stifled by fear.

²⁸⁶ Soph. *Ant.* 69-77.

concern with death is one meant to stimulate a life worth living. By being willing to stake her own life for the sake of justice, she is championing better conditions for the inhabitants of Ciudad Tebas. Her concern with burial rites is less interested in the ceremonial aspect of putting a body to rest and is instead invested in the idea of honoring life and preserving memory for the sake of correcting the conditions that have led to unnecessary and brutal deaths. This in turn becomes a social act.

As deployed in this play, burial rites become symbolic for collective self-acknowledgment. For Tebas to emerge from its present condition, it is necessary for its citizens to acknowledge, grieve, and live through the aftermath of femicide. This is an idea that will be revisited at the end of the play. When Antigone speaks of sacrificing herself, it may seem that she is forgoing and diminishing the importance of her own life. However, there is a clear investment in the idea of living an existence with humanity and dignity in a place that upholds both. Though expressed through the language of life and death, what Antigone is exhibiting is altruism in the purest sense. Her efforts throughout the rest of the play will see her drive move from the personal to the universal. Before examining Antigone's journey, however, it is important to look at one final scene of womanhood in Ciudad Tebas which resonates strongly with the two scenes we have just examined.

The brief Scene VI, titled 'Concealing of the murderer', is a haunting domestic episode between a mother and son. In it, a man drenched in blood is being washed by his mother, who sings a lullaby as she washes. Only the mother speaks in this scene, and she says the following,

WOMAN: Everything is alright. Isn't it true that everything is alright? (*silence*)...Of course, everything is alright (*she helps the man put on a shirt*), forgive me for being so hardheaded...Everything is alright, right? (*He does not respond, exits*).

WOMAN: Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women... Holy mother of God, protect him. You who as a mother know of this

pain... (*She sobs*). Forgive them (feminine) Lord. You know that he only obeys, that he executes your will. Lord, you know that. Right? (De la Rosa 2004: 205-06).

The mother's actions and inaction do much to characterize an aspect of the city's failing. The scene takes aspects of Eurydice's criticisms but inverts them to question social responsibility and the citizens' collective complicity in the problems of Ciudad Tebas. The mother character in this scene treats the man with a conflicted attitude that lands somewhere between fear and infantilization. Her singing of a lullaby as the scene is established foregrounds her attributes as mother and caretaker and hints at the relationship between the two. Her apology, however, is given with language of self-deprecation and doubt that presents the power imbalance in the relationship. The mother is clearly fearful of and for her son but refuses to comment on his condition. Her prayer as the man leaves is especially disturbing. She asks for forgiveness not for the man, who is heavily implied to be a serial murderer, but for some unspecified object grammatically gendered feminine. The woman begs 'perdónalas'. Two possibilities emerge from her use of this word. The word could be referring to the man's sins as its object, which could be represented by the elision of a gendered feminine word like 'ofensas'.²⁸⁷ This would imply the mother's awareness of the wickedness of the man's actions and a deliberate attempt to ignore and suppress them. However, this requires us to supply the word with no real indication to do so from the remainder of the passage apart from the vaguely religious context. Alternatively, the word 'perdónalas' could be taken at face value and simply be read as a word taking an unspecified female plural object. This gives the woman's words a more sinister spin as it would suggest that she sees women, likely the victims of the man's heinous acts, as being guilty of something in need of divine forgiveness. In either case, agency and culpability are taken

²⁸⁷ The 'Our Father' prayer uses 'ofensas' where the English would use 'trespasses'.

away from the man in question and his violent acts go unpunished and unrevealed. The mother thus becomes complicit in his violent acts by acting as an accessory who conceals his actions.

In the context of the two preceding scenes, centered around the daughters of Oedipus and Eurydice respectively, this scene acts as a sort of thematic cap for this section of the play. It compels us to see a variety of reactions to the violence of Ciudad Tebas as it affects women from different walks of life. In so doing, we are directed to think of the multitude of factors contributing to the impunity with which femicide is met in Ciudad Tebas. In Eurydice's scene, we witness the grief of a mother coming to terms with her daughter's death and actively blaming and shaming a corrupt system for its apathy and complacency. At the same time, we see Eurydice stand in as a symbol for that corrupt system who executes actions of suppression and dismissal, even if unwittingly. Eurydice is complicit due to her faith in a system that devalues and destroys women. She has internalized the talking points and positions of her social class and consequently finds herself marginalizing and discrediting the suffering of others in service of the status quo. She represents those who are complicit because they choose to accept the city's condition while blaming those victimized as responsible for their own suffering. In the episode between Antigone and Ismene, we see the effect of fear and loss on two women who have lost much because of the city's circumstances. We see the extent of the collateral damage born of the city's treatment of women, and bear witness to the extent to which sororal bonds and solidarity are prevented through fear and violence. We see represented those who abandon the struggle for justice for the sake of self-preservation and witness the rationale for such a course of action. Finally, with the mother's coverup of her murderous son and his actions, we perceive a different kind of fear – that of a mother unwilling to accept her son's direct role in advancing violence

and murder. For this character, it is preferable to stand aside and allow him to continue instead of facing an uncomfortable reality and resisting it as necessary. This episode demonstrates a collective failure to hold those responsible for victimization accountable for their actions. It shows a citizen's willingness to turn a blind eye to violence and actively conceal its application for the sake of leaving a certain order, be it domestic or social, undisturbed.

De la Rosa's play very carefully presents the struggles faced by the women of Ciudad Tebas, and therefore Ciudad Juárez, in its narrative. Though it invites us to consider our culpability and complicity in leaving a destructive social order unchallenged through its characters, it does not allow itself to victim-blame or to shift the onus of responsibility away from the corrupted institutions that meet femicide with impunity and apathy. In staging the stories of the women examined thus far, this play compels us to think of them as victims of the same destructive system. Even Eurydice, in her symbolic role as mouthpiece for the system, is left unaware of the gruesome realities suppressed by her husband. This suppression and Antigone's opposition to its continuance become the central subject for the remainder of the play. As we turn our attention to this aspect of the narrative, it is important to remember that concealment in all its forms is presented as an action motivated by this particular patriarchal social order. This order victimizes women and prevents them from coalescing through the deployment of fear, lies, and the application of class and gender distinctions.

Between Life and Death – Antigone and the Morgue

The play's main act of resistance manifests itself as Antigone's incursions into the city's morgue. She has already expressed a desire to infiltrate the morgue in her conversation with Ismene. Scene VII sees her gain the reluctant allyship of Haemon, who

expresses his love for her and his willingness to support her in whatever she decides to do. Haemon facilitates Antigone's entrance into the morgue, but he cannot bring himself to fully believe that his father may be lying about the morgue and the bodies piling up therein. He agrees to assist her entrance but does so with the hopes of proving to Antigone that her father's words are true and accurate. As Scene IX begins, Haemon expresses his belief in his father in unambiguous terms. What follows is a conflicted monologue in which Antigone ruminates on how she does not wish to find her sister's corpse within the walls of the morgue. She says,

ANTIGONE: I have to find you. I would like to stop my heart to not face this moment, but I need to know what happened to you. Alive or dead. It is unbearable to think that you should find yourself trapped within these walls and under the dark gaze of those who did not wish to protect you. And it is unbearable to think that hidden among those aberrant eyes is the one who brought you death. I must find you...God...God. Do not let me find her here (De la Rosa 2004: 207-08).

The language of sight is once again present in Antigone's words and runs contrary to the priorities expressed by Creon and his affiliates. Antigone remarks on the gaze of the state and those who are tasked with the protection of the citizens of Tebas. Their gaze is turned inward to guard and suppress the city's failings. The state averts its vision outward instead of focusing it on its citizens, a failing we remarked upon earlier in Eurydice's speech and here identified, to some extent, by Antigone's words. Alongside the language of sight, we witness the strength of Antigone's convictions. Though she fears the prospect of finding her sister's corpse, her commitment to the truth compels her to search for her body inside the morgue. Though she does not find her sister, she nevertheless comes across a body that shifts the order of her priorities. Inside a room filled with black body bags, she is taken by the face of a young woman and speaks the following,

ANTIGONE: You sleep? Sweet stranger. You are not Polinice, and I don't know why my heart, tormented until just a few moments ago, feels a brief relief. Can it be perhaps because I am submitting myself to the incoherence of searching for what I do not wish to find... No, that is not true. I know perfectly well what I am searching for, and for some time already I have known what I am likely to find. I had only the faintest hope of finding you like this, so sweet and beautiful, so human, despite finding you like this, dear Polinice, just like this gentle stranger
[...]

It is over. I will not allow her to remain here, not for one more minute... (De la Rosa 2004: 210).

Upon laying eyes on the young stranger's lifeless body, Antigone is confronted with her own feelings about her sister's disappearance. Antigone is aware that Polinice is no longer living. She is also aware of the violent reality of femicide victims, whose bodies are often brutalized and mutilated beyond recognition. When she sees the body of the young girl and gazes upon her untarnished face, she voices her conflicted wish to have found her sister in as peaceful a state. Accepting that she is unlikely to find her sister and provide her with a proper burial, Antigone's priorities shift. She turns away from her sister's burial and more fully towards the unveiling of injustice and opposition against state enabled violence. In a reversal of the ancient Antigone's actions, De la Rosa's Antigone becomes transgressive because of her will to uncover and not through a desire for burial. Her will becomes manifest in her attempt to retrieve the young stranger's body from the morgue.

The episode between Antigone and the young woman provides the strongest instance of solidarity, empathy, and sorority found in De la Rosa's play. We have already seen that the machinations of the state and its apathy towards death and violence have prevented and destroyed relationships. However, Antigone's encounter with the stranger suggests that these things are still possible and contingent on an acceptance and championing of truth. When Antigone accepts the reality of her sister's fate, she is able to conceive of sorority in an elevated sense. The desire for justice and truth born from her sister's tragedy is

symbolically transferred to the body of this young stranger, for whom Antigone will risk life and limb in an attempt to free her from the darkness and concealment of the morgue.

As the scene ends and Antigone's goal is resituated, a guard enters the room with the body, forcing Antigone and Haemon to hide. In what can only be described as a macabre moment of defilement, the guard stumbles upon the body of the young girl and does the following,

The guard enters, he is nervous, he is cold. He discovers the girl's body and approaches with caution.

GUARD: Wandering again? Do not run away from death's refuge.

He lifts her up. When he feels her body, he stretches her along his own. He then begins a brief funerary dance. A single rhythm, slow, intimate... He sets her on the table. Antigone and Haemon bear witness.

GUARD: Here before me, another one, a girl with bare feet, so cold, as cold as fault and shame.

He gently kisses her feet (De la Rosa 2004: 211).

It is important to note that the stranger is here referred to as a 'niña', or a young girl, which makes the scene all the more disturbing. The guards patrolling and his command directing a corpse to remain within 'death's refuge' foreground the play's politics of concealment. The girl's body is a prisoner of the morgue. Her death and existence are to be suppressed and denied until they can be obliterated in a literal sense. This scene presents an instantiation of everything Antigone had been surmising and dreading in relation to her sister's death. The fact that this young woman is not her sister does not lessen the fact that the state's failures have created an environment of violence. We can see that the state directs resources to suppress the results of such an environment instead of combatting them in any way. The guard's conduct and the tender language used to describe his actions signal the complete corruption and decadence of city officials and employees at every step of the ladder. Though a lower-level employee, this man designated as a guard does not protect life or safety but

instead guards the city's dark secrets while handling a femicide victim with a complete lack of respect. Creon's Tebas is rotten at the core. Its corruption is discernable at every level. In presenting this notion, De la Rosa's play lifts the mirror to the audience and compels us to question our own complicity and complacency in allowing injustices to go unpunished. The next scene, a break from Antigone's narrative, puts such a notion into perspective by staging a day in the life of a woman of Tebas.

Scene X, The Anecdote, sees the return of the same woman who spoke the prologue to this play. Simply referred to as Woman 1, the speaker tells us of a random act of violence which threatened her life as she awaited the bus following a day of work. She tells of a shootout that occurred near her and frightened her within an inch of her life. The woman remarks on a couple of things that are instrumental for contextualizing the play's final moments. She says,

WOMAN 1: In this city, it is difficult to think of oneself as living. One afternoon, after work, while I waited for the bus, I was overtaken by the noise of screeching of tires. Then I heard a flurry of more than 30 gunshots. They've killed a guy, I thought. Then there was a second flurry that now felt like it was right above my head. My body reacted before I was even aware, I sheltered myself under the bench at my bus stop. My heart was overflowing, my entire pulse of life was hanging by a thread, then a third flurry...Finally, silence...By the way, I am still alive (De la Rosa 211-12).²⁸⁸

The woman's words reveal another facet of the reality afflicting Ciudad Tebas. The problem of violence in the city is widespread and extends far beyond femicide. This episode in particular hints at an escalation of violence that closely mirrors that of Ciudad Juárez in the 2000s. In addition to the problems of femicide, Juárez saw an increase in violence caused by

²⁸⁸ The word I have here translated as 'guy' is 'uno' in Spanish. The whole sentence reads, 'ya mataron a uno'. The gender of the language is decidedly masculine, which is noteworthy in a play which frontloads the killing and concealment of women. In the city's environment, no one is safe from the reach of violence and death.

cartel activity, the drug on wars, and the influx of American weapons into the border city.²⁸⁹ The woman's supposition as she hears the gunshots says 'ya mataron a uno', more literally 'now they have killed some man'. Her read of the situation insinuates that this is a regular occurrence with a discernable and common outcome. Life in Ciudad Tebas is fleeting. The shadows of fear and death are oppressive and ever-present.

The woman's words as she opens and closes her anecdote are especially important in the context of Antigone's incursions. Her indictment against the city, when she states that it is difficult to think of oneself as living, directs us to think of the liminal space between life and death often occupied by Sophocles' Antigone character. In this adaptation, it is not Antigone alone who finds herself at the edge between life and death. The citizens of Tebas, and in particular its women, find themselves pushed into this liminality as a result of the city's failings. When the woman ends her harrowing tale, she claims that she is still alive despite feeling the presence of death overwhelm her. She effectively collapses the categories of living and dead onto one another. As an immediate follow-up to Antigone's descent into the morgue, the woman's discussion of a life despite the constant threat of death compels us to think of Ciudad Tebas as a place of troubled existence, wherein the dead are not allowed respite and the living cannot truly live.

In discussing the death-like state of the city, Jesse Weiner's chapter *Antigone Undead* aptly analyzes the biopolitics of De la Rosa's play.²⁹⁰ Weiner concludes that the liminal state between two deaths to which the character Antigone is typically relegated is here expanded to the city of Tebas/Juárez. Femicide is thereby made a social trauma which condemns the city to an incomplete existence – a realm where the shadows of death and

²⁸⁹ Though the problems of drug-related violence in Mexico go far beyond the scope of this project, Morris, 2012 Mercille 2015, and Shirk and Wallman 2015 offer good preliminary analyses of said problems and their causes ranging from state corruption to the consequences of US hegemony and its impact on indices of violence in Mexico and economic outcomes which create the conditions for violence and instability.

violence loom and delimit the actions of the city's inhabitants. Weiner's argument in this chapter persuasively represents the liminality of Ciudad Tebas as a city of death. In his view, Antigone's journey does not appear to be quite as important as De la Rosa's indictment of ineffective power structures and the playwright's unearthing of collective trauma. Though I agree with these ideas as central to De la Rosa's project, I argue that the final scenes of this play as focalized through Antigone's journey have much more to say about life in Ciudad Tebas/Juárez and the burdens faced by those who choose resilience in the face of overwhelming oppression.

Antigone's incursions into the morgue possess a mix and subversion of generic elements that work in tandem to fully explain the problems of Ciudad Tebas and Antigone's heroic role therein. Contextualized by the woman's anecdote, Antigone's first incursion into the morgue reads as a *katabasis*, a descent into the underworld. Like an epic hero, Antigone descends into a place of death.²⁹¹ Though she enters to retrieve her sister, she shifts her purpose and focus after an encounter with the young, lifeless stranger. There is no direct guidance given to Antigone, but this encounter nevertheless acts almost as a vision or a prophetic consultation.²⁹² Antigone learns a fundamental truth when she lays eyes upon the stranger. She can no longer abide the treatment and concealment of her corpse and those of

²⁹⁰ See Weiner 2020.

²⁹¹ This *katabasis* could also direct us to something like Plato's 'Myth of Er' or Aristophanes' *Frogs*, thereby shifting the generic register of the play. If taken with Plato, there is hope that Antigone's return could signal a change in the ethical pursuits of her surroundings following the transmission of newfound knowledge. With Aristophanes, the shift to the comedic could direct us to think of this scene, and the play itself to a large extent, as a staging of the grotesque. Given the sensitive subject matter of the play and the immediate relevance of its presentation for its early audiences, I do not think a comedic register would have been received positively regardless of what it wished to highlight. Antigone's return from this underworld-like setting and her eventual resuming of her wanderings are most akin to Odysseus, thus my comparison to an epic hero.

²⁹² In his analysis of Homer and Near Eastern parallels, Louden 2011 identifies three generic elements in Homer's *Odyssey* XI. These are *katabasis*, the consultation with a deceased prophet, and the vision (a genre of myth in which a mortal is removed from the mortal plane and given previously hidden understanding by an otherworldly guide.)

the women she represents. Like Antigone, Haemon also learns of the morgue's contents, but his reaction is delayed a few scenes.²⁹³

In her second venture into the morgue, Antigone attempts to retrieve the young woman's body. However, she is caught by the same guard who was dancing with the young woman's corpse. This leads to Antigone's capture. An abridged version of this encounter is given below,

ANTIGONE: I have returned, I will not disturb your sleep. I will only take you to the warm embrace of the earth.

GUARD: What are you doing here? These are not business hours. Do you know what you are looking for?

ANTIGONE: Please, let me take her.

GUARD: Take her? Are you crazy? Are you not aware of the decree?

ANTIGONE: You also have a family. You would not allow this to happen to them.

GUARD: Those of us who live at night have no family

[...]

What do you have there? (*He forces his hand below her skirt, he hugs her, and dances with her as he did with the dead girl*). You are so warm. But I am a professional, and I must turn you in (De la Rosa, 20004: 212-13).

Taken in its totality this scene is jarring. In one sense, the play gives us something we do not witness in Sophocles' *Antigone* – Antigone in direct contact with a body. On the other hand, we immediately get a mention of business hours which completely shatters any Sophoclean illusions and allusions. This encounter reinforces some of the dynamics already observed and staged throughout De la Rosa's play. By conceiving of Antigone's action as a violation of Creon's decree, the guard is demonstrating a full awareness of the morgue's current function, his place and contribution within a sociopolitical hierarchy, and his own role in concealing the truth in accordance with Creon's mandate. The man is fully complicit in the state's machinations and failings. The dismissal of Antigone's pleading and his blatant assault upon her further represent the extent of the decay introduced by Creon's regime. In

²⁹³ Haemon does not speak of his knowledge of the morgue and its contents until Scene XV, when he confronts Creon.

denying the existence of family, the man is disavowing any social connection that may pave the way towards empathy and solidarity, thereby aligning himself with the state's mandates to the detriment of truth, humanity, and justice. His remarks about living at night evoke ideas of darkness and concealment. To work and live as he does, with a conscious apathy towards the state's transgressions, dissociates the man from his bonds to humanity and reiterates his complicity to the state. He also creates a strange juxtaposition of Antigone and the young woman in the scene's final moments.

In treating Antigone as he had the young woman's corpse, the man exercises a statement and threat of force and violence. Within this morgue where the city's bloodied history is concealed, this action mirrors the social power imbalance predicated on divisions of gender. Antigone's very existence is at the mercy of this man whose words and actions hint at sexual violence. Like the man in the play's first scene, the guard is leaning on notions of legality to exert his power on a vulnerable person. In this instance, the man's action results in Antigone's capture, which is characterized as an act of violence given the scene's context and the parallels with other scenes (Scene I in particular). Antigone is turned in to Creon, which allows for the only direct confrontation between the two in this play. Before their meeting is staged, however, we are presented with one final Brechtian interlude in which the same woman who narrated the previous episode (the shootout near the bus station) continues the tale and her mindset after the fact.

Scene XII, condenses and focalizes life in Ciudad Tebas through the eyes of a singular and poor woman. After having witnessed an act of extreme violence with her life on the line, the same woman from the prologue and Scene X gives us her reaction to the aforementioned events. Furthermore, she states that she has decided to safeguard her

daughter's life alongside her own as a result of what she has witnessed. Her brief meditation reads as follows,

WOMAN 1: [...] I knew that the matter had been a shootout between two bands of traffickers. That stray bullets ended the poor life of a poor man... an insufferable stench was suffocating me... A woman was left lying before the eyes of her four-year old little one... My daughter is the same age. I was suffocating... I wished to flee, but where to? That night, I decided to enter the shelter... Some of them say it's an exaggeration. I just know I am a woman, alone. All I have is my daughter... if they take her from me, they take away my world... there is an insufferable stench up there, in the city. Is it the plague? (De la Rosa, 20004: 213).

As a final interlude running parallel to the story of Antigone, this scene foreshadows Antigone's eventual departure from Ciudad Tebas. In her brief monologue, the woman pinpoints some of the factors which stifle the notion of a simple existence in the city. The propensity for violence within the city is represented in the conflict between traffickers. The ensuing collateral damage shows the indiscriminate manner in which death operates within the troubled city. The repetition of the word 'pobre', or poor, in the woman's description of the man provides a pleonastic but intensifying characterization of the man's existence and his socioeconomic status. Likewise, the death of the mother and the orphaned child are presented as a boiling point for the woman's assessment of the city. The feeling of suffocation described in the woman's monologue correlates with the accumulation of abuses and injustices depicted throughout the play. The unnecessary loss of innocent lives, the state's inability, or unwillingness, to prosecute and combat injustice, and the very real possibility that the woman may lose her life or be forced to endure the loss of her daughter compel her to seek shelter underneath the sands of Tebas.

It is important to note that the woman describes her realization in a psychosomatic manner. She mentions a stench that intensifies as her (completely justified) anxieties grow. When she proposes that this stench might be 'the plague', we are once again reminded of the

ancient narratives of mythological Thebes. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Thebes was a city afflicted by miasma as a result of the actions of its leadership. Likewise, Ciudad Tebas is here experiencing an encroachment of pollution incurred by the increasing number of deaths facilitated and concealed by its corrupted governing structures.

In response to this violence, the woman identifies fleeing and finding shelter as possible recourses but marks sheltering as the only viable option. Her monologue reveals that she cannot flee the city, for she does not know where she might go to avoid the city's plagues. Given the woman's socioeconomic status and the fact that she is alone in the city with her young daughter likely disallow her from realizing an effective escape. Money and support networks are necessary for effective migration. Her resulting incursion under the sands of Tebas is simultaneously inevitable and disheartening. In seeking to preserve her life alongside her daughter, their only recourse is concealment, an act which diminishes their existence and parallels the silence imposed upon femicide victims and those who would seek justice. In this manner, the state continues to inflict violence upon its people by compelling them to effectively commit a species of social suicide for the sake of self-preservation. The women will live, but not as citizens of Tebas and not in the light of day. Their concealment can fuel Creon's fiction of a great and vibrant city by suppressing its bloody reality. The stench of the plague, however, will one day become unbearable and undeniable, a fact which is spoken in whispers as the play reaches its conclusion.

Antigone, Haemon, and Creon – Dialogues of life, love, and death

The confrontation between Antigone and Creon fuels the events which conclude De la Rosa's play. The scene plays out similarly to the Sophoclean version and likewise adopts the duality between mortal and divine law. De la Rosa's version, however, is very clearly

written in favor of Antigone and highlights the manner in which mortal law is perverted and distorted in the interest of maintaining corrupted power structures.

CREON: Did you know what was ordered regarding those dead women?

ANTIGONE: How could I not? You were always efficient when it came to making your will known. Your orders were publicized throughout the entire city. They were clear and precise.

CREON: Perhaps you believed that being the daughter of proud Oedipus would be enough to put you above the law.

ANTIGONE: No, I did not think that.

CREON: The law was made primarily for you, Antigone. The law was made primarily for the daughters of kings! And still you decided to mock the law!

ANTIGONE: Because it was your law.

CREON: It is the law of this city.

ANTIGONE: The law of a mortal can be ignored by another mortal. I know that you will command my execution, which would be to my benefit in my atrocious state of suffering. I entered to rescue the corpse of my mother's daughter, to give it burial and the final rest that neither you nor anyone else can deny her.

CREON: You violate the law, you break order, and to top it off you show yourself to be satisfied. You pretend to showcase your crime as something admirable.

ANTIGONE: When the tyrant breaks the law, he does so in the name of order. And he calls the citizens' dissidence a crime. Rebellion. Danger. You speak of your law? You, who break divine laws, natural laws? You, who have assassinated justice? (De la Rosa 2004: 214-215).

The confrontation between Antigone and Creon has a clear resonance with that of the ancient Sophoclean characters. In contrast to the ancient play, however, we here see a stronger indictment of Creon from De la Rosa's Antigone. Antigone is not simply stating that divine laws supersede mortal laws.²⁹⁴ She is augmenting her ancient predecessor's line of argument by making Creon responsible and culpable for the death of Justice in Ciudad Tebas. Not only did justice not write the laws espoused by Creon, but justice itself died at his hands. He is denounced directly as a tyrant. As such, Antigone characterizes her own actions as rightful dissidence in opposition to a tyrannical command. De la Rosa's Antigone also dismisses Creon's appeal to order by glossing that very order as a rhetorical tool – an excuse used to justify oppressive behavior.

The ancient Sophoclean play gives Creon space to explain his conception of the *polis* and the need for order to preside therein. De la Rosa affords Creon no opportunity to describe his ideation of order or denominate what it is he is attempting to protect with his actions and edicts. As the scene progresses, it becomes apparent that Creon's central anxiety is that of losing his power, a power founded on ideas of capitalist success and economic markers of prosperity. His speech reads thus,

CREON: I would advise anyone who values their own life not to make your words their own. According to you, the gaze of others indicts me. That is not what the voices that have elected me governor of Ciudad Tebas say. Do you know why? Because they enjoy the incredible wealth that I provide them. Because this, the great city, is much more than its problems. Because we learned to tame the desert. Because we, the people of Tebas, proudly confront slander. Because none of the scandals that have been fabricated against us has wounded us. Because the bullet that crossed my head did not decapitate the state. Against your rebelliousness I place the strength and the wealth I provide for them. Meanwhile, your foolish voice only attracts calamities. If you could understand, I would explain that it is not easy to steer this ship believe me, the sweet honey of power vanishes immediately. I do not have ears for everyone, I do not have answers to all demands. Even God is selective. I can only occupy myself with the issues of the majority. I dictate measures that will guarantee Tebas' survival. For this reason, my rod is the law. It rules for everyone, and it does not allow for insolence (De la Rosa 2004: 216).

Despite the lack of empathy created for the character and the baselessness of his arguments, this is the closest evocation of Sophocles' Creon in De la Rosa's counterpart.²⁹⁵ As he discusses the weight of his responsibilities, De la Rosa's Creon speaks with language reminiscent of Sophocles' Creon. Like his ancient counterpart, he conceives of the *polis* as a ship and considers himself its helmsman.²⁹⁶ As has been the case throughout the play, the

²⁹⁴ Soph *Ant.* 450-54. Antigone argues that Creon's mortal laws cannot overrule those established by the gods.

²⁹⁵ This is not the extent of this scene's evocation of Sophocles. Creon's words about taming the desert are also reminiscent of the passages describing humanity's inventiveness in the famous Ode to Mankind (Soph. *Ant.* 332-375).

²⁹⁶ Soph. *Ant.* 184-190.

language of sight is once again front and center.²⁹⁷ Creon identifies the gaze of others as potentially detrimental in Antigone's words. He consequently attempts to diminish the impact and power of that gaze throughout his speech by averting its focus from humanist failings to economic success. Creon defends his actions and dismisses Antigone's claims by turning to the city's wealth production to bolster his arguments. He has created wealth for those who put him in power. In addition to being blatantly biased towards an upper class and dismissive towards the suffering of much of Tebas' population, this claim is complicated by the fact that Creon has already expressed a disenfranchisement of those who oppose him on separate occasions. When initially publicizing his edict, he revoked the citizenship of any who should slander the city with claims of femicide. In this scene, he does the same for Antigone saying the following,

CREON: And this city demands silence from you. Tebas no longer recognizes you, it no longer calls you its daughter. It casts you from its bosom like the plague that contaminates everything, that poisons all things (De la Rosa 2004: 217).

Creon's words simultaneously demonstrate an understanding of Antigone and her history and a deep fear of her potential as a result of her lineage and fearlessness. His choice of language is particularly telling. In stating that his law was made precisely for the daughters of kings, 'para las hijas de los reyes', Creon expresses a concern with feminine sovereignty and agency. The law is meant to constraint the involvement of women demanding social change. His law has proven effective in its deployment. Characters like Ismene, the daughter of a king, are paralyzed by fear. The law has demanded and enforced silence through

²⁹⁷ A quick recap: Scene I establishes a relationship between sight and concealment and expresses the dangers of sight (i.e., 'those who wish to be seen are seen themselves'). The dialogue between Antigone and Ismene in Scene IV foregrounds the language of sight to characterize the sisters and to remark on their history. It also represents the state's failings as a result of the turning of its gaze inward and its powers towards

indirect means. By presenting a direct challenge to his methods and boldly defying his law, Antigone symbolizes Creon's greatest fear. She is aware of the city's darkness and threatens to shine the light of truth upon it. Creon employs constant and specific language of silence in an attempt to dismiss Antigone and her resistance. In likening her voice to a carrier of calamity, Creon is drawing from the history of the ancient Theban royals. Creon's words link Antigone's actions and defiance to the consequences of miasma which afflicted the ancient city.²⁹⁸ However, when analyzed in the context of the play at large, it is clear that Creon's words are a denunciation of his own methods and actions. The calamity he fears will be brought about through Antigone's voice is already afflicting the city. The secrets concealed in the morgue are reaching a point of saturation, and the metaphorical and literal plagues of violence are spreading through the city because of his rule.

The final moments of this scene offer an instantiation and clarification of the dynamic presented above. The exchange between Creon and Antigone reads thus,

ANTIGONE: You know what I see in your eyes? Fear...a terrible fear. That is why you do not immediately kill me. Maybe it is more comfortable to keep a living but silent Antigone.

CREON: Be quiet!

ANTIGONE: You want to silence me, but here you are drinking in my words because you know I am right. You think I don't see that you know? You know I am right, but you will never admit it because you are holding on to your power like a beast.

CREON: For the last time, be quiet! I command you!

ANTIGONE: Poor Creon! With broken nails full of dirt, with the bruises your guards gave me, with my poverty... I am queen (De la Rosa 2004: 218).

concealment. Eurydice's arguments in Scene V revolve largely around ideas of sight and the foreign gaze, as do the arguments of Creon's advisors.

²⁹⁸ Creon's words to Antigone create an artificial equivalence between the actions of Antigone and Oedipus. Whereas Oedipus unfortunate acts do incur the miasma for the ancient city, those of Antigone do not. Nevertheless, Creon uses his exalted position to punish Antigone in an equivalent manner. He revokes her citizenship, effectively banishing her from Ciudad Tebas.

With this exchange, Antigone claims a triumph over Creon that he is unable to refute. Antigone cannot be silenced. She speaks the truth, and this gives her a power Creon cannot take away from her. She represents a regal figure uncorrupted by fear and power. As such, she is able to identify fear in Creon just as she did with Ismene. Fear appears to be the common trend at the center of the city's failings. For the marginalized, the fear of losing life prevents solidarity and collective action. For the comfortable, the risk of ruffling feathers and making waves inspires complacency and complicity. For those in power, the fear of losing it causes a moral corruption. In an effort to maintain power, Creon and his people opt to maintain the course of the city. They suppress truths, conceal the city's failings, and create the sense of impunity that fosters violence and snuffs out justice. When Creon and his followers realize that they cannot dismiss Antigone as a slanderous traitor, their recourse is to turn to direct violence.

Although openly antagonistic towards Antigone, the scene between Antigone and Creon suggests that Creon is somewhat lenient towards Antigone out of consideration for his son, Haemon. However, as Creon's power threatens to slip, even this consideration for his own kin begins to wane. Antigone's threat to Creon and his regime is expressed most succinctly by Creon's advisor, Victor. In briefing Creon about the current state of affairs, he says the following,

VICTOR: It worries me that this whole scandal may have crossed the borders of Ciudad Tebas. The foreign press cannot be contained. Our allies in Argos called me this morning. They were very anxious about what is happening. Surely our negotiations will see themselves affected (De la Rosa 2004: 220).

In this passage, Ciudad Tebas is imagined as part of a larger geopolitical system with stakes attached to the image it presents internationally. The outcry over femicide and the mounting demands for justice are reaching the ears of foreign powers and threatening Theban

economic interests. Creon's previous words regarding wealth and his government's assistance of the wealthy suggest that an economic blow would be detrimental to his power. Furthermore, when taken as an allegory for Ciudad Juárez, this passage invokes the image of the border city. Ciudad Juárez is interdependent of the bordering city of El Paso.²⁹⁹ The image of violence and instability has historically threatened foreign investment and negatively impacted the city's economy.³⁰⁰ Like Juárez, the image of Ciudad Tebas must reflect a certain reality for it to maintain its alliances and preserve its economic interests. When Victor identifies that Antigone is a threat to Tebas' image, he says the following to Creon,

VICTOR: The law is the law. It seems to me that you are yielding too much. In this current situation, whoever is not with us is against us. That woman {Antigone} is committed to displaying the evidence that would doom us. Whether she wants to or not, she gives credence to our enemies. Whoever proceeds like that can only be called a traitor and deserves that the full weight of the law should befall her. And if the law is not enforced, we should at least guarantee that her criminal audacity will remain a secret (De la Rosa 2004: 220).

Victor's discussion is representative of the city's fraught relationship with the law and its application. Victor is referring to Creon's edict and denouncing Antigone's actions as a violation of that edict. By attempting to shed light on the city's darkness, Antigone is acting in defiance to Creon's instructions and is therefore liable to be treated as an enemy of the state. The law, it seems, is used as a tool for the powerful and is intended to quell dissent. Despite Victor's advice regarding the law and the need for it to be followed and enforced, his fervor is presented as self-serving. He shows no comparable concern for the femicides and violence plaguing the city and is instead worried that Antigone's actions may destroy

²⁹⁹ Cuninghame 2007 describes the socioeconomic relationship of the border cities with a particular interest in the cities' maquiladora sector as a hotbed for the formation of transnational identities.

³⁰⁰ Although most intently focused on public health and the impact of violence on border children, Hernandez & Grineski 2012 examines the impact of violence on the border economy and its direct consequences for families.

their current state of affairs and their grasp on power. His words also reveal an additional divergence in character in De la Rosa's Creon. In contrast to his ancient predecessor, De la Rosa's Creon appears to be less firm in his convictions. His initial response to Antigone is essentially a slap on the wrist. He does nothing to her in regard to her defiance of his law and sets her free. It is not until his interactions with Victor and Haemon that Creon orders Antigone's death.

Scene XV sees a pained dialogue between Creon and Haemon. Haemon attempts to convince Creon that his advisors are clouding his visions – presenting to him a reality that is not accurate. Like his ancient model, he reports the sentiments of the people to his father.³⁰¹ In essence, this scene closely corresponds to the confrontation between Haemon and Creon in the ancient tragedy.³⁰² Haemon reports the state of the city, he defends Antigone, and he confirms his support for her cause and actions before departing from Creon's side. Similarly, Creon speaks of the weight of being a ruler, infantilizes Haemon, and dismisses his actions as those of someone ruled by a woman. Although De la Rosa borrows heavily from the ancient tragedy, her play's divergences from the ancient model are marked and noteworthy. Whereas the Sophoclean play has Haemon challenging his father's stubborn and unchanging character, De la Rosa's Haemon speaks intimately to his father as one who laments the changes he perceives in the man. Upon reporting the state of the city, Haemon speaks thus,

CREON: What ruler has no detractors? My enemies are divided even in their discontent. Some whine about taxes, others about violence, and even more about unemployment. Day after day I hear their complaints. Thanks to my authority and power, I keep them united and separated at the same time. But if I showed myself to be hesitant or indecisive, then anyone would be ready to usurp my command.
Silence.

³⁰¹ In Soph. *Ant.* 733 Haemon reports to Creon that the people of Thebes do not conceive of Antigone's actions as madness.

³⁰² In particular In Soph. *Ant.* 631-765.

HAEMON: That great strength and that courage, that giant God that took me in his arms and saved me from the monsters and the shadows, was that you?

CREON: Yes, Haemon.

HAEMON: All that care, all that pride, all that love, has it all come to this?

CREON: Yes.

HAEMON: It is not true. Father, this is not you. It is not today. We are not together at the foot of this border of fear. You are still powerful, like when I was little. I am too alone, and the world is too bare if I can no longer admire you (De la Rosa 2004: 233).

There is a tension in De la Rosa's play that is not as palpable in the ancient narrative.

Although Creon appears to be inflexible about his own image and conceptions of power,

Haemon speaks of a discernable incongruence in his character. Haemon speaks of Creon's

pride and love and pinpoints a lack of these values in his governance of the city. In response

to this, Creon tells Haemon that he pardoned Antigone out of consideration for his son. He

states,

CREON: ...considering the love I have for you as your father, on this occasion I consented to pardoning her. Were it not for you, I would have never failed to uphold the law that I myself established. But there will be no second chance.

HAEMON: Then punish those guilty for these dead women and return the bodies to the proper people because it is certain that Antigone will persist in her effort.

CREON: [In that case] I will no longer think as your father, and she will receive the promised penalty (De la Rosa 2004: 224).

The complexities in Creon's character are laid bare in this discussion. Creon speaks of the

law and its rigidity in the same passage in which he explains that he has made concessions

for the sake of his son. Concurrently, he turns to speak of how the law would also be

enforced against his son when Haemon invokes it in regards to punishing those who have

committed femicide. As a head of state, Creon is a far cry from his ancient model. The

ancient character displayed a firm idea of his role as a ruler and its function within the state.

He acted as guided by human law. Although inflexible in its application in a manner that

results in tragedy, there is a constancy to the character that is not found in De la Rosa's

Creon. De la Rosa's Creon acts in accordance with his own interests and his adherence to power. He retracts his own laws if convenient and resorts to them when threatened. Whereas the Sophoclean Creon's tragedy is born of inflexibility and a sense of legalist absolutism, De la Rosa's Creon advances towards tragedy because of his fear of losing power. His ideological stance is almost non-existent. He shows no genuine allegiance to law and acts in accordance with his desire to preserve his own power. The fact that this pursuit is aligned with the preservation of the status quo is almost incidental.

In discussing the ideological monism of Antigone and Creon in Sophocles' *Antigone*, Lauren Apfel identifies the clash of the absolutist standpoints of the plays' main characters as the trigger for the resulting tragedy. For Apfel, Creon's overreliance on rationality and rigidity for the sake of preserving the state result in an overapplication of the law that ultimately destroys his own household.³⁰³ In transforming the character of Creon, De la Rosa's approach deviates dramatically from this model. As a result, Creon's flaws, faults, and culpability are exacerbated and marked as primary contributors to the state's most egregious failures. In removing Creon's ideological core and instead characterizing him as a tyrant afraid to lose power, De la Rosa disallows an ideological equivalence between the positions of Antigone and Creon.³⁰⁴ Antigone is acting for the sake of justice. Creon is acting to preserve his power. Though this dynamic has been suggested throughout the entire adaptation, these final chapters all but assure that this is the case. As the meeting between Creon and Haemon draws to a close, Haemon speaks one final thought before leaving to join Antigone. He tells his father,

³⁰³ See Apfel 2011, especially Chapter VII.

³⁰⁴ As a quick reminder, this characterization corresponds with that observed in Pianacci 2015. In Latin American adaptations, Creon tends to be cast as an irredeemable oppressor and Antigone acts for the sake of the marginalized.

HAEMON: Do not tremble. You will never see anyone else stand boldly before you. By the way, I found more than 200 women's corpses in the morgue. Will you continue denying they exist? (De la Rosa 2004: 225).

These words end Scene XV. Following Creon's discussion of legality, his dismissal of Antigone's actions as slander, and his words about power and kingship, Haemon's words are spoken as an ice-cold reality check. He is aware of Creon's lies and afforded him the opportunity to come clean. Nevertheless, Creon opted to lie and conceal in an attempt to discredit challenges to his rule. Haemon's words elicit a marked response from Creon. The text tells us that he crumbles upon hearing Haemon's final words. Following Haemon's exit, Creon's final action is swift and merciless.

The play's next scene shows Creon as he summons Victor to issue a command. He states,

CREON: Victor!

[...]

CREON: Let my law be enforced!

VICTOR: Are you sure, sir? I saw your son leave, and he was very upset. It may be prudent to wait.

CREON: There is no helping this. My son will get over it eventually. This is the lesser evil. Take care of everything (De la Rosa 2004: 225-26).

After Creon's confrontation with Haemon, it appears that Antigone's actions and existence have become intolerable. Creon is here tasking Victor with Antigone's execution. This command is likely a response to Haemon's final declaration. In addition to siding with Antigone, he reveals that he is aware of his father's lies and complicity in the city's troubles. Although Antigone's actions have the potential to be detrimental to Creon's rule, if we consider the Sophoclean context of this play, Creon's immediate response blurs the line between domestic affairs and those of the state. As previously mentioned, Creon is initially willing to ignore his own laws and appears to have no qualms about skirting legality for the

sake of maintaining his own power. However, Antigone's actions have now affected his domestic affairs and shattered his relationship with his son. In response to a domestic intrusion, Creon retaliates with a weaponized application of the law. However, his plan does not go exactly as envisioned.

The play's penultimate scene stages Haemon's declaration of love and companionship to Antigone. Haemon meets her in the desert as she resumes her search for Polinice. As the two meet and appear to form a bond of love and companionship, the young man's life is cut short as a result of Creon's attempt on Antigone's life. The text tells us that he died protecting Antigone from the attack. Antigone's final words in this scene are a declaration of love for Haemon. Though brief, this powerful scene stages the state's violent suppression and its effect on attempts towards love and solidarity.

Antigone and Haemon had finally come together ideologically and emotionally. However, the state's violent drive towards repression and suppression extinguishes the embers of resistance and solidarity before they can enact action. Though the bullets fired were meant for Antigone, power's tendency to destroy ends up squandering its own future. With the death of Haemon, the play stages power's tendency to destroy itself as a result of its own greed and fear of change. With a single action, Creon disallows the union of Antigone and Haemon, but he also destroys his own household – an action with an elevated resonance when read through the lens of Sophocles. In mismanaging his household and causing its demise, Creon is signaling an equivalent destruction of the city he rules. Although Creon fails to kill Antigone, his final action is a clear indictment of his position as head of state and a representation of his unchecked potential for perpetuating pain. The play's final scene portrays Antigone meditating upon these ideas as she resumes her wanderings away from Ciudad Tebas.

The play's final scene sees Antigone depart Ciudad Tebas with a solemn address. It begins,

ANTIGONE: You are mourning, city of mine. You must be mourning. They have killed all hope. The law has abandoned you. The only law which is a sister of life and love with which the bonds that tie us are woven (De la Rosa 2004: 227).

Antigone's final address recapitulates her experience in Ciudad Tebas. At this moment, Tebas has become a place of infamy and violence. In this address, Antigone anthropomorphizes the law and states that it has abandoned Ciudad Tebas. Her linking of the law to love and life is particularly interesting. In characterizing the absence of law in this manner, Antigone is drawing an existential connection between law, life, and love. With the absence of the first, the other two cannot take hold in the city. The death-like existence of Tebas' citizens speaks to this clearly. Women are forced to enter underground shelters and live a limited existence. The very space they are allowed to safely occupy is limited and made untenable from an economic standpoint. The lawless impunity that has normalized violence has created an environment where life cannot take hold. Ciudad Tebas has become a city of death. Love is likewise a casualty of law's departure.

The failure of sorority and solidarity to coalesce has been explored repeatedly in this play. The play's first scene and Antigone's discussion with Ismene both demonstrate the manner in which this absence of law stifles relationships through fear. Bonds are broken, empathy is prevented, and solidarity fails to form among the citizens of Ciudad Tebas. The death of Haemon is the most dramatic example of love's dependence on law as presented by Antigone. Haemon's abrupt and violent end comes immediately after he has declared his fully committed and loving alliance to Antigone. Power's dismissal and perversion of legality has banished the spirit of law and has destroyed the potential for solidarity and cooperation born from bonds of love. The fact that the relationship between the three

concepts (law, love, and life) is discussed in terms of sorority, only reinforces their disjunction in Tebas as paralleled by the failed sororal relationships presented in the play.³⁰⁵ This disjunction is paralleled in the relationship between Polinice, Antigone, and Ismene as well as the trio of sisters in Scene I. As Polinice is killed without law to avenge her, the relationship between Ismene and Antigone is fractured. The sisters' capacity for love and life is therefore diminished as neither can be fully upheld without the spirit of the law.

As her speech continues, Antigone identifies the cause of law's departure and accuses those responsible. She says,

Your traitorous rulers have given you away to infamy. They grow their wealth from your misery. And not satisfied with your laments and tears they want the blood of your sons and daughters. They want to make you bow with horrors, they want to subdue you with terrors until no corner of your soul is left without trembling, until your protesting voices are muted. Until you are a slave of your own volition. Weep for your sins and the sins of those who govern you, allowing the sand to drink your very blood (De la Rosa 2004: 227).

Antigone's words rest the blame of the city's suffering at the hands of its leaders and those who benefit from their governance. It is clear that Ciudad Tebas has been brought to its knees by the interests of a few wealthy and powerful individuals. Their success is built on the blood and bodies of the marginalized and forgotten. In this passage, Antigone highlights the mechanisms of the city's power structure. It accumulates wealth through the exploitation of the vulnerable, quells resistance with violence, and maintains the city's twisted order through fear. This mechanism deprives the city of its will to resist and ushers in a downtrodden complacency among the citizens.

Although Antigone has opposed complacency throughout the play, her words suggest that she understands that complacency is a defense tactic for those brutalized by fear

³⁰⁵ With 'in terms of sorority' I refer to Antigone's characterization of the law as the sister of love and life.

and violence. In describing this complacency as a form of slavery, Antigone reemphasizes the class-based elements of the city's troubles. Though she appears to understand the processes coercing the city into silence and submission, she nevertheless denounces the city as a sinner. Notably, she presents the sins of the city and those of its governors as distinct. The servile rhetoric preceding that of sin marks the city's obedience as its grand flaw. In this move, Antigone equates complacency to complicity. This equation can seem somewhat unkind but coupled with the final words of Antigone's address it suggests a path forward for the city – one of self-acknowledgment and healing based on notions of truth and accountability.

Antigone's final words read thus,

Justice has abandoned you. Do you realize? There is no justice. And there will be no justice until all of your citizens – all of them, do you hear? – Wash away the blame of these crimes. Until all of your children cry the bitter tears of the dead desert women (De la Rosa 2004: 227-28).

Antigone's words read like a condemnation. Although the city is a victim of its rulers, Antigone makes it share some culpability for its misery. As was the case with the law, justice has also abandoned the great city and will not return until the conditions Antigone has stipulated are met. The return of justice to the city will depend on a collective reckoning of the city's faults and crimes. What has been suppressed for the sake of the few must be recognized, understood, and mourned by the entirety of Ciudad Tebas. The crimes concealed by the desert sands, that is to say the deaths of its women and the exile of its survivors, must be unearthed and acknowledged before any legitimate healing or progress can be achieved.

Antigone's words carry the weight of prophecy. They address the city and discern its future. In some respects, her words are almost curse-like. They condemn Tebas to a

miserable and incomplete existence until the curse's conditions are met. The content of these words and their heightened presentation are highly reminiscent of Oedipus in the final moments of his life in *Oedipus at Colonus*. De la Rosa has already demonstrated a sophisticated and complex engagement with Sophocles' works. As such, I believe it is productive to conceive of this scene as a purposeful and effective inversion of the ending of *Oedipus at Colonus*. Like Oedipus in said play, Antigone has achieved an elevated understanding of her city and its ongoings as a result of exile and suffering. Her distance from the city has made her wise to its failings and its poor governance. Both characters are able to see the world more clearly and walk single-mindedly towards what they perceive to be a place of rest. It is here that the inversion of this play is manifested in De la Rosa's *Antigone*. In the ancient play, Oedipus is searching for a place to die in order to confer a blessing to that land. His final resting place, Athens, will be blessed by his tomb and protected from external enemies. In Antigone's case, the enemies of the city are internal. Though she attempts to protect the city from their plundering, she ultimately fails. Like Oedipus, Antigone understands the troubles facing Thebes and appears to curse its rulers for their self-interested desires. The truth she wished to expose, a blessing in its own right, is rejected by the city of Thebes. As such, Antigone is left in exile, a willing wanderer who searches for a place to live where her blessing of truth may be received. Although the ending of this play is solemn and potentially chastising, the resonance of De la Rosa's play and *Oedipus at Colonus* affords us the opportunity to be hopeful and interpret the play as a major step towards fulfilling the conditions of Antigone's words.

Departing the City and Hope for the Future

The fact that Antigone is alive at the end of this play is in itself a symbol of hope. Though battered and brutalized in her pursuit of truth, Antigone lives. Her ideals are

unshaken, and her potential for resistance and triumph are preserved. The day will come when the conditions Antigone has expressed will be met. At that time, the city will emerge from darkness and be reborn as a city of life and love. Antigones' departure tells us that this will not happen soon. She is compelled to resume her wanderings because, as it stands now, Tebas is a city of death. Having witnessed the impunity with which violence is perpetrated in the city, she sees no prospects of love or life in the city's panorama. Nevertheless, there is hope. Although the path is mired with pain and misery, the city is not dead. The citizens of Tebas are resilient. They have the ability to raise the city from darkness, but for this to happen, resilience is not enough. The citizens can raise the city by not averting their eyes and by resisting the encroachment of its inhumane rulers. In presenting this idea, De la Rosa's play compels us to mourn and to seek and champion truth, for this is the path towards liberation. Nevertheless, it also demonstrates truth's heavy burden and the cost of its pursuit. As is the case with Antigone and Oedipus, seeking the truth in a polluted city is a difficult and demanding task. For father and daughter, this pursuit ends in exile. Antigone's departure is a reminder of what happens to those who seek to live truthfully in a city of death. The stagnant air of a city abandoned by justice consumes and pushes away those who would seek to live peacefully and truthfully in an environment of violence.

Taken in its totality, De la Rosa's play is an indictment of the powers that stifle and dissuade the action of even its most preeminent citizens. By the play's conclusion, Antigone is left alone in the desert – a dispossessed wanderer deprived of love and family. Though De la Rosa's play is surely a call for collective self-reflection and action, it stands powerfully as a marked indictment of the power structures that have made even the most regal of its citizens exiles in favor of perpetuating violence with impunity. Yes, the citizenry can act and mourn, and doing so brings us a step closer to a more complete existence. However,

mourning comes after burial and grieving, two things made impossible under the veil of falsity preserved by the power structure. Healing cannot begin when trauma is unacknowledged, let alone suppressed. Unfortunately, the issues explored and critiqued in De la Rosa's work are not limited to Ciudad Juárez.

The conversation regarding femicide in Mexico has spread far beyond the borders of Ciudad Juárez. Regrettably, so has femicide. Violence against women and femicide itself have seen an uptick throughout Mexico.³⁰⁶ Most regrettably, the tactics of suppression, impunity, and dismissal portrayed in De la Rosa's play are an ongoing reality that has reached the highest seats of power in the country. National conversations have ranged from discrediting feminist movements combating gender violence by characterizing them as oppositional and partisan attacks to shifting the responsibility for femicides onto families by claiming that moral failings start in the home.³⁰⁷ Incidents of gender violence are dismissed as pranks by the very president of the nation.³⁰⁸ Reports of increased femicide rates have been counteracted with statistics showing a reduction of petty crimes like gasoline and car theft.³⁰⁹ It is clear that the deeply seated problems of corruption, impunity, and malicious incompetence which have exacerbated the conditions for femicide have not been addressed in a Mexican context.

Faced with a reality in which women's voices are met with suppression and dishonesty, De la Rosa's play stands as a powerful reminder of our collective failures to resist oppressive and exploitative systems at the cost of our very livelihood. At the same time, it is a testament to resilience and to the power of truth. Despite the brutality of her

³⁰⁶ Sandin 2020 notes the rate of femicide in Mexico, its steady growth since 2012, and its exponential climb since 2015. Sandin marks 'systemic impunity' as a major contributor to the increase in femicide.

³⁰⁷ See Salinas Maldonado 2021 and Redacción Animal Político 2020.

³⁰⁸ See Kitroeff 2020. In response to the report that over 26,000 emergency calls regarding gender violence had been made in a single month, the president of Mexico, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, said without supporting evidence that 90% of emergency calls had been pranks.

surroundings, Antigone's spirit remains firm. Her commitment to truth and life is strong enough to endure despite the realities of unchecked violence and oppression. She perseveres and keeps alive the hope for change. Though written for a specific and localized context, De la Rosa's play continues to have a striking and universal relevance. Beyond being an indictment of corrupted power and a call to action, this play is a plea for collective coexistence in the truest sense. It is a raw and vivid demonstration that states who fail to protect the humanity of their citizens sow the seeds of their own destruction.

³⁰⁹ See Pérez 2021.

V. Conclusion

The *Antigones* analyzed in this dissertation demonstrate the malleability and diversity of Sophocles' ancient play as received in a modern Latin American, and specifically Mexican, context. As I hope to have shown, even within the constraints of a single national context, adaptations of *Antigone* are varied, original, and rich in complexity and sophistication. These adaptations differ in their interpretation of Sophoclean characters and tropes. Each adaptation speaks to specific cultural contexts informed by the traumas and anxieties of their respective eras. Their understanding and deployment of Sophoclean dynamics is wide-ranging, and through their variability, they demonstrate a profound engagement with the history of *Antigone*. Though these plays choose Sophocles' *Antigone* as a launching pad, their contributions are unique and pointed. In the hands of Mexican playwrights, Sophocles' *Antigone* negotiates a baseline from which the discourses of oppression, resistance, revolution, and resilience can be birthed and developed. If we are to speak generally, these *Antigones* exhibit an interest in the practice of cultural introspection and denounce cultural and personal failings as readily as they do systemic abuses.

In showcasing the diversity of these adaptations, my aim has been to highlight the potential for an enriched and expanded engagement with the global tradition of Sophocles' *Antigone*. By taking the time to analyze culturally specific and hyper localized adaptations, we can develop and enhance our understanding of the ancient play and the significance of its reception for a modern and interconnected world. As I bring this dissertation to a close, I wish to provide a synthesis and commentary on what these plays represent when seen together.

How many *Antigones*? – Building blocks of a tradition

In writing this project, I have done my best to present the corpus of Mexican *Antigones* as the building blocks for a distinctly Mexican tradition of adapting the ancient play. However, there are, to my mind, two primary difficulties for speaking of Mexico's *Antigones* as being part of a tradition which need to be addressed and considered. The first, there is scant evidence suggesting any interaction between the adaptations which comprise the corpus. For many of our plays, Anouilh, Brecht, and even Steiner seem to be influential and akin to cultural touchstones. However, I have found no evidence of Mexican playwrights discussing previous Mexican *Antigones* as influential for their own adaptations. This does not necessarily mean that there is no interaction between them, nor does it mean that we cannot conceive of their totality as part of a trend or corpus. Nevertheless, this puts the 'traditional' aspects of the tradition, at least those concerning a cultural inheritance, into question.

The second problem is related to the first and stems from the fact that these *Antigones* appear to be most heavily influenced by European adaptations and engagements with the ancient play. Such interactions blur the lines between our categories and exemplify the limitations of our classification systems. Where does the European tradition end and the Latin American begin? When does the Latin American label become insufficient for discussing Mexican particularities? I do not pretend to have an answer to these questions, but I firmly believe there is merit in approaching cultural engagements from within a cultural tradition and informed by specific social, historical, and political contexts.

The limits of our classification systems notwithstanding, it is likely that the history of *Antigone* in Mexico is in its infancy. Our corpus is small but expanding, and the vast majority of its exponents are productions from the last two decades. Although I have

focused only on three major examples of Mexico's *Antigones* in my analysis, I maintain that there is something to be gained by conceiving of these engagements as the seeds for a unique and important tradition. The three *Antigones* analyzed in our chapters serve to establish patterns and delineate a trajectory. They are foundational for understanding a new context and for building an intellectual tradition based on our interpretations. By conceiving of the rich and diverse reception of *Antigone* in Mexico as a budding tradition, we gain a powerful lens through which we can rethink some of our assumptions about *Antigone*'s present and future as well as the global tradition of adapting this ancient play.

What do we stand to gain? Enriching models and expanding perspectives

The Mexican *Antigones* which compose the previous chapters can help us to reconsider and enrich even the most rudimentary assumptions made of *Antigone* adaptations in the modern age. In *Feminist Readings of Antigone*, Fanny Söderbäck states the following when discussing the fundamental components of modern adaptations of *Antigone*,

Whenever and wherever civil liberties are endangered, when the rights or existence of aboriginal peoples are threatened, when revolutions are under way, when injustices take place—wherever she is needed, Antigone appears. And although the details and context may vary, certain elements of the story always remain the same: the lone individual fighting against state power, the kinship burial rites, and, interestingly, her status as a woman (Söderbäck ed. 2012: 3).

Söderbäck's analysis helps explain the pervasiveness of modern *Antigone* adaptations by attributing to them an impetus based on the political and driven by opposition to injustice. Notably, however, the three elements marked as fundamental to *Antigone* in contemporaneity are problematized by the existence of the plays here examined. Although *Antigone* is certainly fighting some manifestation of injustice in all three of our plays, the

remaining aspects of this framework find themselves challenged in some regard through this limited corpus.

In the case of Fuentes Mares, the ethical dilemma of the play centers an ideological break between forces operating against the state in question. However, the state is never represented in the play, directly or indirectly. Characters make reference to social disparity and economic inequality, but the state is never discernably represented or even fully defined. The Antigone character resists a group of revolutionaries which holds neither allegiance nor affiliation with the state. In this context of revolution, Antígona's resistance becomes an opposition to violent methods which would jeopardize the lives of innocents. If anything, she is resisting a consequence of the state rather than the state itself in any discernable form. The birth of her new humanist ethic at the end of the play – that is to say, her belief in intrinsic human value over social divisions and manmade institutions – could have implications for her continued participation in society as one who opposes injustice more directly. However, this is not represented in the play, and Antígona's future is left for the audience to define.

The concern over kinship burial rites is likewise absent in this adaptation. There are no characters in Fuentes Mares which could correspond to Polynices or Ismene. There is no concern over burial rites, and burial is at no point a concept of contention during the adaptation. Dialogues of kinship are instead replaced with an elevated conception of the term, wherein all of humanity is included in its category due to an ethic of intrinsic human value.

Olga Harmony's *Antigone* also deviates from Söderbäck's model, albeit to a lesser extent. As is the case with Fuentes Mares, Harmony's *Antigone* features a protagonist who does not confront the state directly. Harmony's Cristina (Antigone) confronts and resists an

oppressive force born as a consequence of the state and what it supports and allows. However, she does not confront or resist the state itself. This *Antigone* instead reads as an indictment of the state by virtue of what it enables. Its ethical pursuits denounce the prevalence of social and racial inequality but simultaneously delimit these pursuits to a nominally domestic sphere. Given the revolutionary and historical context of this play, it is very clear that the events of Marcos' estate are symbolic of the country as a whole. In such a case, *Antigone* is resisting an oppressive state of affairs. Stating that she is simply opposing the state and claiming that this is the same for all other modern *Antigones* risks undercutting the significance of Cristina's struggles as well as the play's ideological positioning. In seeing the state as the primary force to be resisted, we miss the significance of Cristina's inner turmoil. While opposing a centralized power, Cristina must come to terms with her own positionality within an exploitative system. To focus solely on the state is to suppress the collective social, cultural, and ethical failings which enable oppressive power structures to take root and be replicated – a central concern for the resolution of Harmony's play.

Burial rites are undoubtedly present in Harmony's adaptation and can be said to be instrumental for the development of the narrative. However, they are repeatedly and explicitly deprioritized to the benefit of a humanist ethic which extends beyond class, gender, and ethnic divisions. As was the case with Fuentes Mares, the concept of kinship is resituated to highlight the arbitrary nature of social stratifications. For these earlier Mexican *Antigones*, burial rites do not appear to preserve the centrality observed in the Sophoclean original or many other modern adaptations.

The very aspect of *Antigone* as a lone individual (a more minor component of Söderbäck's model regarding Antigone's position in resisting the state) is also problematized through our plays. The presence and narrative trajectory of the Haemon

characters in *Harmony* and De la Rosa present us with moments of allyship and collaboration in direct opposition of each play's established power structures. In both plays, Haemon is presented as a young man from privilege transformed into a figure of resistance by the reality of abuse perpetrated against the marginalized. Both plays expand on and complicate their Sophoclean predecessor by presenting a Haemon who sides with *Antigone* and is prepared to adopt her cause fully with no regard for personal consequences. Although Haemon's effectiveness as a figure of resistance is undercut by his death in both plays, he very clearly opposes the establishment in full support of Antigone and her causes. In this regard, only Fuentes Mares' *Antigone* can be seen as a lone individual acting in resistance to a larger structure.

As we move forward in the history of *Antigone* in Mexico, it is true that adaptations begin to adhere more closely to Söderbäck's model. Of our chosen corpus, De la Rosa's *Antigone* follows the elemental components laid out above most closely. Although kinship as a concept is troubled and contentious in De la Rosa's adaptation, the play nevertheless uses burial rites as an important platform for its narrative. The object of burial shifts from Plonice to a nameless stranger and again to the totality of women of Ciudad Tebas. Additionally, there is some conflict surrounding the idea of burial as a metaphor due to the fact that burial is also linked to concealment and suppression in the play's politics and language. Nevertheless, these shifts are consistent with the given parameters and compel us to consider another important line of thought about classical receptions in the modern world.

In the introduction to her coedited volume *Dionysus since 69: Greek Tragedy at the Dawn of the Third Millennium*, Edith Hall argues that 1968 marked a cultural turning point in which the political ideologies of a younger generation broke from the more conservative

politics of its predecessor.³¹⁰ In Hall's view, this was a shift towards more progressive political leanings which were reflected in the subsequent explosion of adaptations of Greek Tragedy starting in 1969.³¹¹ Although her argument is typically read to be applicable to the Anglophone world, Hall specifically mentions Mexico along with other countries when describing the expansive and worldwide reach of Greek Tragedy beginning in 1969.³¹² It is possible that the gradual urgency and directness of these adaptations in Mexico is a result of this phenomenon. As we have seen, Fuentes Mares (1968) is not necessarily oppositional to mainstream politics in its deployment, something that cannot be said with any semblance of confidence about his successors. By the time we get to De la Rosa's play, we see a vivid critique of the status quo with direct and unambiguous political messaging. Considering this trajectory, it is possible to think that the ease of communication and interaction ushered in by a more interconnected and globalized planet has created the conditions for an increasingly homogenized interpretation of *Antigone*. This may help explain the gradual lack of ethical ambiguity represented in the positions of Antigone and Creon in more modern adaptations. However, in adopting this perspective, we risk diminishing the accomplishments of playwrights who create at the borders of cultural, political, and even counter-cultural zeitgeists as well as the social forces at play in their production.

To fit adaptations from a wide range of perspectives into a singular model is to run the risk of allowing important uses and reimaginings of ancient material to go uncritiqued and unexamined. By taking on board Hall's model, we are able to explain some of the changes in the narrative trajectory of *Antigone* in Mexico. From Fuentes Mares to De la Rosa, we witness a dramatic shift in the use of the ancient play. This trend aligns with Hall's

³¹⁰ Hall, Macintosh, and Wrigley 2005.

³¹¹ This point is echoed in Rabinowitz 2008, which reads and adopts Hall's observations but appears to see them operating mainly in major U.S and European cities.

³¹² Hall, Macintosh, and Wrigley 2005, esp. pp. 3-4.

model and likewise conforms to Söderbäck's observations about the core tenets of modern *Antigone* adaptations. These two arguments are complementary, as Hall's observations provide a valuable explanation for Söderbäck's claims. However, the history of *Antigone* in Mexico tells a slightly different story which may help us reconsider our understanding of classical reception and its investment in modern societies. At this juncture, Harmony's adaptation becomes especially important.

Harmony's play exists outside of Söderbäck's model as a post-1968 adaptation of *Antigone*. As mentioned above, Harmony's *Antigone* deprioritizes burial rites and does not quite show the character challenging or opposing the state in its narrative. Of the Mexican adaptations following that of Fuentes Mares, Harmony's play is the most willing to humanize the figure of Creon, a fact that likewise resists the major trajectory of Latin American *Antigones*. This is the adaptation closest to Fuentes Mares' in chronology. Nevertheless, it challenges preestablished notions about *Antigone* in the global tradition of reception. Furthermore, it is also the only Mexican *Antigone* adaptation between that of Fuentes Mares and the year 2000. Harmony's work thus acts as an important bridge, binding together two vastly different eras of Mexican identity and politics. Understanding the historical context dividing these two eras is important for reframing our understanding of classical reception in Mexico as well as the deployment of established models for its investigation.

The year 2000 marks the moment in post-Revolutionary Mexican history in which single party rule comes to an end via democratic election and a peaceful transition of power. Scholars of the period identify this election as the moment in which Mexico took a major step towards a legitimate political democracy.³¹³ In the conclusion to his 2004 co-edited

³¹³ For an analysis of the importance of this election for Mexican history, see Domínguez & Lawson ed. 2004.

volume, *Mexico's Pivotal Democratic Election: Candidates, Voters, and the Presidential Campaign of 2000*, Jorge I. Domínguez discusses the positive and potentially damaging effects of this particular presidential election for the future of the country. Despite his observations of increasing political gridlock and the normalization of political smear campaigns, Domínguez notes that after this election, Mexico becomes a freer and more open country in which the governed can express their views and choose their rulers. Despite codification of the right to free speech in the Mexican constitution existing since 1917, Domínguez suggests that it is the effort of previous decades culminating in this election which makes the ideals of free speech more concrete and attainable.³¹⁴ This notion is troubled by the fact that Mexico continues to fall short of its ideals by continuing to be one of the most hostile and dangerous countries for journalists.³¹⁵ Nevertheless, the political landscape post-2000 appears to have given the people of Mexico a renewed sense of political participation and influence over civic practices. I would argue that along with an improved sense of sovereignty came an increase in the willingness of people to denounce political abuses and neglects more directly.³¹⁶ This tendency is consequently reflected in the adaptations of *Antigone* of more recent years.

Considering this shift in the political landscape, it is not surprising to note that the boom of adaptations of *Antigone* in Mexico comes after the year 2000.³¹⁷ The greater senses of urgency, directness, and opposition written into adaptations like those of Gabriela Ynclán

³¹⁴ For an overview of the history of freedom of speech and freedom of the press in Mexico, see Arjona Estévez 2018.

³¹⁵ Mexico has been deemed a dangerous country for journalist for some time and was even listed as the most dangerous country for journalists in 2020 by the Committee to Protect Journalists, which investigates attacks against the press around the world (Lakhani 2020). For long durée accounts of freedom of the press in Mexico, see Arjona Estévez 2018 and Esquivell Ventura & Buendía Hegewisch 2018

³¹⁶ Dominguez 2004 speaks of the increasing ability of the governed to contest political views following the political campaigns of Mexico 2000.

³¹⁷ With the exception of Fuentes Mares and Harmony, all of our Mexican adaptations of *Antigone* are staged in the year 2000 and following. Andrade Jardi's *Los motivos de Antígona* from the year 2000 is closer to

(2009), which directly stages a governmental failing and its impact on a community, or David Gaitán's *Antígona* (2015), which stages a regicide at the hands of the people, are likely the result of a desire for civic participation born from a belief in the potential for change represented in the aftermath of the 2000 election.³¹⁸ The disruption of a single-party regime following this election gave a greater flexibility to spaces of public speech such as the university and the theater. There was no longer such a present need to obfuscate the politics of an adaptation in fear of retribution. This is reflected in the politics of our adaptations.

The *Antigone* of Fuentes Mares is highly ambivalent in its politics. Though I have read the play as a meditation on humanist thought and a guard against extremism, it can be seen to advise passivity in times of crisis if read less generously. Fuentes Mares' play has no obvious political target and does not overtly rock the boat of any established institution. Harmony's play is a bit more daring in its indictment of the status quo but nevertheless finds itself negotiating a space within the parameters of what is allowed in the theater under a specific political climate. The playwright says so herself in an interview, stating that she wished to write from a political left-leaning perspective to manifest free thoughts and ideas. She continues by saying that at the time of her writing, one could not be entirely free in what they produced.³¹⁹ This likely explains why Harmony couches her critiques under layers of temporality and signification. De la Rosa's *Antigone* is written after the shift of the 2000 election.³²⁰ She is more directly critical of even specific political regimes and landscapes

its predecessors in its approach. Although critical of broad cultural and political issues, this play has a vague time and setting and does not take direct aim at specific events, people, or institutions.

³¹⁸ This is not to say that adaptations of Greek Tragedy did not exist in years prior to 2000. Adaptations of Greek tragedy have been present in Mexico since the early 20th Century with the formation of the Ateneo de la Juventud (Atheneum of Youth). For more in this, please refer to this dissertation's introduction. Likewise for information on the two Mexican adaptations here noted.

³¹⁹ See Montaña Garfias 2014.

³²⁰ To reiterate, Andrade Jardí's *Los motivos de Antígona* (2000) retains a general ambiguity in its deployment. Although critical of institutions and societal failings in the abstract, this play does not exhibit the

and does so in a play with a highly localized and specific resonance. The trend of increased political resonance, visible through these three plays, compels us to revisit and revise the models we have thus far discussed.

It would appear that Edith Hall's argument about global classical reception post-1968 is delayed in Mexico until the advent of another pivotal moment. It is not necessarily the contentious year of 1968 which causes ripples in the cultural production of ancient drama in Mexico, at least not as seen through *Antigone*. The shift most akin to Hall's observation comes after the year 2000 following an increased belief in the legitimacy and potential of civic participation. When considering the world altering movements of 1968, it is important to note that the Mexican institution which quelled popular uprisings continued to hold centralized power until the year 2000 (i.e., the Massacre of Tlatelolco under a PRI regime). The potential for change championed and, in many ways, attained following the sacrifices of the Civil Rights Movement and comparable global popular movements would not seem attainable in Mexico until a much later date. It would seem that it is the expansion of the franchise, democratization of institutions, and the possibility of collective influence over power which facilitate the phenomenon noticed by Edith Hall. Investment in the franchise allows cultural production to oppose a defective status quo. This in turn leads us to amend Fanny Söderbäck's statements about *Antigone* as it exists in this vastly different historical landscape.

To recapitulate, Söderbäck identifies three core elements in modern adaptations of *Antigone*: Antigone is always a woman, she is a lone individual confronting state power, and her narratives center a concern with kinship burial rites. As we have already discussed, the plays here analyzed deviate from this model in important and marked ways. Antigone's

directness of plays like those of De la Rosa, Ynclán, or Uribe. These plays are all listed in our introduction's chronology.

existence as a woman appears to remain constant. However, burial rites are either omitted or deemphasized in these adaptations, and Antigone's opposition to the state is similarly inconstant. Even if we were to adopt a more permissive reading of Söderbäck's claim, we would still need to amend her statement.

In Mexico in particular, it is not a state which is being opposed in reimaginings of *Antigone*, or at least not a state in the sense of a centralized power. Instead, *Antigone* in Mexico is more concerned with opposing, denouncing, and changing a state of affairs. The state may be complicit, or even the primary culprit of continued and collective sufferings, yet these *Antigones* increasingly denounce cultural failures and communal apathies just as strongly in their narratives. They exhibit an indictment and resistance of a cultural present which does not live up to its potential and undermines human dignity. The plays likewise critique a collective past through their use of Sophocles and its historical associations.

Antigone in Mexico compels us to reconsider our understanding of the wider use of the play as a tool for political introspection and civic discourse. In so doing, it challenges our interpretative models and invites us to consider more closely, and to incorporate more fully, diverse approaches to classical reception. Doing so promises to expand our understanding of the play and its collective appeal. Additionally, a serious incorporation of the scholarship surrounding classical receptions from diverse perspectives shows us that important arguments and interpretations of our plays have, in some instances, been anticipated by scholars outside the Anglo-European bubble of classical receptions.

The exclusion of Latin American scholarship regarding its own traditions of classical reception impoverishes broader conversations about *Antigone* and its continuance in the modern world. As a quick example, a version of Edith Hall's argument about 1968 is preempted by the work of Spanish scholar María del Carmen Bosch, which observes a

greater variance of politics, interests, and aesthetic character in Ibero-American adaptations of *Antigone* specifically before the same temporal mark.³²¹ The fact that this argument anticipates Hall's posture by more than half a decade speaks to a lack of communication between scholarly communities pursuing similar interests.

A similar occurrence can be seen in the recent work of Simon Goldhill. In a 2018 lecture titled 'The Politics and Poetics of Form: Why Everyone Has Got Antigone Wrong', Goldhill claims that readings of *Antigone* following Hegel are misled by an overinvestment in the ideological contrasts between Antigone and Creon.³²² In a reading of the text which highlights the supporting cast of the Sophoclean tragedy, Goldhill argues that we should read the play through the rest of the Sophoclean characters and thus interpret Antigone and Creon as fringe members of the elite holding extreme characteristics. As such, the ancient tragedy is a guard against extremism more so than an ethical dilemma of 'right vs. right'. The argument made here is compelling and important. However, I would argue that elements of this reading are already present in Fuentes Mares' work from 1968 and identified by Romulo Pianacci in his overview of the play, albeit with less elaboration, as he reflects on Sophocles' *Antigone* through his reading of Fuentes Mares' adaptation.³²³ In an increasingly interconnected and diverse academic landscape, failing to engage with global perspectives (that is to say non-Anglophone and non-European perspectives) is akin to neglect and exclusion and more likely to steer us towards getting *Antigone* wrong.

Antigone's Future

As I hope to have shown, the Mexican tradition of *Antigone* is as diverse and complex as its people. It is informed by historical and social contexts and complicates our

³²¹ Bosch 1999. Bosch is a celebrated Professor Emerita of Spanish, Modern, and Latin Philology at the Universitat de les Illes Balears.

³²² Goldhill 2018.

understandings of concepts as varied as solidarity, life, love, oppression, abuse, complicity, complacency, and the very idea of human value. Mexico's *Antigones* challenge our readings of the ancient tragedy and urge us to question the recurring need to tap into these narratives in the first place. As is the case elsewhere, *Antigone* is used to resist and denounce social injustices. However, *Antigone* in Mexico seems to me especially critical of our own culpability and participation in systems of abuse and oppression.

With the passage of time, the character of *Antigone* is becoming increasingly multifaceted and intersectional. The ethical ambiguity in the figures of Antigone and Creon appears to have waned in modern reimaginings, but the intricacy embodied by the characters within these narratives continues to elicit visceral responses and ethical ruminations on par with those of the ancient tragedy. Antigone's life beyond the ancient Greek theater now blurs the lines of time and space and evades simple classification. Though I here argue for the importance of understanding a fragmentary aspect of *Antigone*'s present, the future promises to evolve the character and narrative far beyond what we have examined. *Antigone* is increasingly used to negotiate transnational issues like those examined in Marc David Pinate's *Antigone at the Border* (2022). As we become more interconnected and our relations to one another more complicated, adaptations of *Antigone* emerge to reflect our ethical inadequacies and the plight of those at society's margins. Such a trend necessitates that we value every voice represented in the diverse adaptations of this ancient play.

In undertaking this project, I had initially set out to demonstrate the exceptionality of my culture's engagement with the *Antigone* due to what I perceived to be an inexcusable lack of representation in the world stage. As I close out this dissertation, my thoughts have shifted slightly but in some important ways. I still consider the corpus I have presented to be

³²³ See Pianacci 2015, esp. 228.

extraordinary and important, but I also understand that this is simply the tip of the iceberg. I am absolutely confident that engagements as rich as these have been overlooked in a variety of cultural contexts due to a lack of cultural knowledge, language skills, or simply a lack of interest from scholarship beyond the Anglo-European sphere. My hope remains that this project, this spotlight on a Mexican tradition of adapting *Antigone*, can be a first step towards a more genuine and nuanced engagement with the reception of Greco-Roman antiquity (and *Antigone* specifically) in Mexico – one which centers Mexicans and Mexican perspectives. In providing my translations of these plays, I hope to invite a wider engagement with a fraction of this important corpus. I likewise hope that this may lead to an increased investment in the investigation of national and regional traditions of reception. This would promote comparative work and elevate our understanding of the cultural intricacies represented in *Antigone* and Greco Roman classical reception across regional and cultural boundaries. In the spirit of the *Antigones* here examined, it is my sincere hope that this small contribution can chip away at some of the barriers which limit our interactions and reduce our capabilities for cooperation.

A Coda on Antigone's Relevance

The story of Antigone remains relevant and present due to our collective failure to erase human divisions, stratifications, and suffering. It is a disappointing thought that we find ourselves needing to recur to the same narrative in order to make suffering intelligible, to voice our sense of pain, and to make a demand for a dignified existence. Nevertheless, so far as human suffering remains a product of artificial social divisions and oppressions, it will remain important to excavate, validate, and most importantly listen to localized and hyper-specific adaptations of Sophocles' *Antigone*. Beyond informing the global trajectory of reception and its importance, the reception of *Antigone* has much to teach us about our own

flaws, our impact on each other, and the hope that can be found beyond the ends of tragedy. As shown by this Mexican corpus, *Antigone* is no longer just a narrative about speaking truth to power. Neither is it a story about mourning and burial rites or the conflict between the state and the individual. In the hands of its readers and playwrights, *Antigone* becomes a clear and lucid mirror held up to society. It denounces complicity, complacency, myopic revolutions, and our tendency to diminish the value of others. It is a constant memento of hope and despair – a reminder of what we can become beyond the constraints of human misery.

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Appendix – Translations

Translator's Note

The following translations are guided by my desire for the readers of this thesis to understand my analyses. Given that none of these plays have been previously translated, I have provided these translations as a service to the field in the hopes of encouraging future scholarship. For these reasons, I have made translation choices that are often more literal than idiomatic. I have made an effort to faithfully represent regional sayings and slangs in a manner that provides equivalent images in the English and have done my best to account for the shifts in language corresponding to each author's unique voice and approach.

Young Antígona Goes to War: Dramatic raving in two acts

Original play by José Fuentes Mares

Translation by Andrés A. Carrete

The setting, a basement or dirty loft with dim lighting. Basic furniture: a table and a few chairs: in the background an old gas stove and a rickety couch. In the corners, empty boxes and other old and useless items.

Act I

Foreword

Before the curtain is raised, a Greek warrior from the days of the Peloponnesian War, equipped with a lance and shield and wearing a mask, addresses the audience:

WARRIOR: Athens suffers a long and bloody war, but nevertheless has the time and heart for art and philosophy. Just yesterday, it applauded divine Aeschylus, and today it cheers for Sophocles and Euripides. In the theatre of Dionysus, the stage has been set, depicting the center of Thebes which lies before the royal palace. Everything is set for the performance of *Antigone*, the maiden who triumphed over death and through whom Sophocles, our Sophocles, has left behind an immortal lesson. He sang the supreme dignity of man in the joyful days of Salamis. (Recites)

*Of the many marvels
which populate the earth, the greatest is man.
He, upon the wings of the South Wind, among the fog,
crosses the white sea without marveling
at the swollen wave of roaring foam.*

*He sets for the birds, the little air heads,
for the monsters of Pontus, and for the beasts
traps, and he is both ingenious and clever,
and under the taming yolk he holds
the tenacious bull of the mountain,
the shaggy foal with reckless neck.
He acquired language and thought,
which outruns the wind,
and the varied temper on which living depends;
whatever one imagines within reason,
his fertile inventiveness surpasses,
that which inspires good, or fails when in evil
Of the many marvels
which populate the earth, the greatest is man!*

The warrior disappears, and a moment later the curtain is drawn. Pedro and Juan are playing dominoes.

JUAN – Idiots have always discovered ways to kill time, like this... playing dominoes with two players. You don't have fours? Go ahead and draw then...

PEDRO – They were idiots or wise men, I don't know. They also invented card games, other ways to mess around. (*He stops fidgeting with the tiles*). There are no fours. Your turn.

JUAN – Let's see if you have a six.

PEDRO – Well, I have every damn tile. Of course, I have a six (*he sets his tile*).

JUAN – Now a five.

PEDRO – Here's a five (*he looks at his watch*) and time flies.

JUAN – (*Doing the same*). Adán said he would be here at 9:00, and it's almost time.

PEDRO – I hope he's on time. I really want to go to bed. You know, sleeping is another way of solving problems like this waiting thing, which drives me up the wall. I would rather be in the country with friends. Now that's the life!

JUAN – The way things are going, they will call us soon, and they will do it how they always do it, without giving us a chance to think twice. After all, we don't have to make wills or testaments like good bourgeoisie...

PEDRO – We won't know what tomorrow has in store for us if we don't achieve certain objectives...

JUAN – And when we do reach our goals, we won't know either because there will be others; work is never finished in our profession!

PEDRO – You speak about our profession with such seriousness!

JUAN – Of course! (*getting up to serve himself a cup of coffee*). It seems that revolution and prostitution are humanity's two oldest professions! It is our duty to be professional before and after victory, as a revolutionary's life does not change just because power has been attained. That's how it is, Pedro; a revolutionary must remain so in and out of power. We can't be like the bourgeoisie who change their clothes depending on whether they are off to a dance or a first holy communion...

PEDRO – Bah! Don't be so dogmatic; someday the Party will order you to change your clothes, and you'll wear that first communion suit, won't you?

JUAN – It is possible, but in any case, they would order it as a battle tactic. It's impossible to change the things that really matter. The Party, for example, could not change your

revolutionary self because it would stop being a hub for activism. You will agree that everything is a battle tactic, and as a tactic, everything the Party orders is good.

PEDRO – (*Laughing*) Your words remind me of that old problem which Plato placed in the mouth of Socrates; about whether the good is good because the gods may wish it so, or whether they cannot help but to love the good. Do you realize how far we could go grounded on such a platform?

JUAN – I do not know and do not care; they are idealistic platforms so old that they're crumbling.

PEDRO – You believe that (*getting up, he serves himself coffee*); if you have really absorbed the dialectic, you will know that there is only one history. Simply forget about names and dates; where Socrates spoke of gods, there I understand the instrument of history. For them and for the Christians, gods were the instrument of history, and for us it is the Party. If the Greeks and Christians thought that the gods could not help but to love the good, we understand that the Party cannot help but to do the same thing. Only that for the Party, what is good is revolution...

JUAN – (*Laughing*) Not bad! I can see that there is still something left of your days as a student (*serving himself another cup of coffee*). No, not bad at all: the revolution will be the good in and of itself, and the Party its historical instrument. Perfect! (*bitterly*) we are perfect theorists!

PEDRO – I do not see why you would want to call yourself a theorist; the police are after you, and not exactly because of your theories. You have -we have, I should say- some incurred debts scattered about, and they are not precisely due to ideas. And as far as the "celebration" we are preparing for tomorrow goes...

JUAN – This "celebration" will be one of the few serious things we will have done in a long time.

PEDRO – Admit then that we are not really theorists. Want to play another round?

JUAN – No, it is past 9:00, and Adán will not be much longer with our comrade Antonio's famous discovery. Our never sufficiently well-praised boss and companion Antonio!

PEDRO – I am legitimately curious about meeting her.

JUAN – Bah!

PEDRO – You know we will be calling her Antígona?

JUAN – Yes, I know, but I do not like the fact that we are so easily allowing her to take part in our projects, least of all when we're handling that important matter...you know the one. We really know nothing about her, except that she has Antonio's brain completely drained, and the same goes for that idiot Adán. For them she is a great discovery, but I am not so trusting; when it comes to new people, I prefer to keep my distance. And even more so in the case of that little miss!

PEDRO – Man, it seems to me that you not liking Antígona comes from a deeply rooted prejudice against the bourgeoisie. Why don't you just admit it?

JUAN – Admit what?

PEDRO – That you dislike Antígona for the same reason you disliked Flora, because she is a woman, and in your twisted soul you believe that it is fine to have a woman in bed, but not in a revolution. If Antonio is convinced that she is worthy, then she is; as far as that is concerned, you can rest assured.

JUAN – Don't be an ass! I don't care if she is a woman; I got along with Flora despite everything. The thing that bothers me about this one is her origin; she is no more than a rebellious bourgeois, and that is enough for me. Rebellious, but bourgeois...

PEDRO – That does not mean anything! You forget that the greatest heretics have been born out of seminaries. If not, then where did you and I come from?

JUAN – You and I did not come from a seminary; we came from the people (*del pueblo*), and they are not the *pueblo*

PEDRO – Of course they are *pueblo*! From where then do you get those who exploit and abuse? Do you suppose they come from an entirely different race? The *pueblo* produces everything, even filth, and Antígona has come from that same *pueblo*, just like you and me.

JUAN – You may be right, but I cannot help being mistrustful. It is true that I do not like having women in revolution, and I like it even less if I am unsure of their background. Look at this one, we do not even know what her real name might be...

PEDRO – The party snatched from the priests the ability to baptize, that which they had unjustly claimed for so a long time. It is enough for me that her name within the Party be Antígona.

JUAN – Antígona it is then!

PEDRO – While we are at it, we are forgetting the most important thing, that which has meaning for us. Are you forgetting that Antígona is a catechumen, and that she will have the fire of the recently converted? Personally, I would wholeheartedly exchange ten old comrades, those that come from misery and hunger, for just one of these specimens that comes to us from the easy life. There is but a single step from hunger to revolution; the difficulty is getting there from a well-served table...

JUAN – Now I cannot help but cackle! Because those who come from ease do not become anything more than sentimental revolutionaries. Since others are hungry and they themselves are eating well, then, obviously, their conscience begins to weigh on them. Oh, poor them! Their battered conscience makes them sentimental revolutionaries! But dig just past the surface, ever so slightly, and poof! Out comes the bourgeois. Just like those carnival toys, in the same way. And now I will be the one remembering, through Socrates, that the Party is not good by virtue of revolution, but on the contrary, revolution is good by virtue of the Party. Without the Party, revolution would not be worth three cumin seeds.

PEDRO – It is the same for Jesuits; whether they believe in God or not may be unimportant; it matters only that they be good Jesuits.

JUAN – Exactly! But... (*three knocks are heard at the door*). Well, well! We're finally going to meet the famous little renegade!

PEDRO – (*He moves to open the door*). It excites me so that she might be a renegade! Renegades have been the ones to make history!

ADÁN – (*He enters accompanied by Antígona; Adán is carrying a small package which he leaves in a corner*). With apologies for the delay, but you know how women are...

PEDRO – Antígona?

ANTÍGONA – The very same

ADÁN – Here you have Juan and Pedro, two magnificent comrades.

ANTÍGONA – Antonio has told me about you

PEDRO – Come in and take a seat. Do you want some coffee?

ANTÍGONA – No thank you, not right now. (*She takes a seat*). Has Antonio stopped by?

PEDRO – Not yet, but he won't be long; we are waiting for him.

ANTÍGONA – Then I will wait for him too. (*She takes a newspaper from the table and reads*).

JUAN – (*Maliciously*) I would like to know what has brought you here.

ANTÍGONA – (*indifferently/with disregard she stops her reading*). Me?

JUAN – To whom else would I be speaking?!

ANTÍGONA – I will say I have come to fulfill an old duty.

PEDRO – Which consists of...

ANTÍGONA – I do not think I should say it for now; I will take that coffee after all.

JUAN – On my behalf and that of Pedro, I appreciate your trust; I hope that once Antonio gets here...

ANTÍGONA – Yes, as soon as Antonio gets here... He mentioned something last night about important matters we would be discussing today; that is all I know.

JUAN – (*Distrustful*) He did not say anything else?

ANTÍGONA – No, nothing else; he was in a hurry and told me to be at the Plaza de la República, where I would meet Adán; he brought me, and here I am; that's all I know.

JUAN – (*After a pause*) Cigarette?

ANTÍGONA – No thanks. I don't smoke. (*Again, she picks up the newspaper and reads*).

JUAN – You are obviously not willing to spill the beans.

ANTÍGONA – I await Antonio; I have already said that is all for now.

JUAN – For now that is fine. What about in the long term?

ANTÍGONA – I don't care for long terms.

PEDRO – So then?

ANTÍGONA – I have come to act, of course.

PEDRO – These rebels! Didn't I tell you?!

ANTÍGONA – I don't know what you might have said, but that is the reason I am here.

PEDRO – Perfect! Among us, you will find great opportunities to fulfill that old duty of which you speak... you will see!

JUAN – I assume you must be one of those naïve theorists, one of the many that exist in your world. Forgive my bluntness. I am sure you have no idea about certain things, like, for example, the difference between the theory and practice of revolution...

PEDRO – Juan is alluding to the potential consequences upon your skin...

JUAN – I am right, am I not?

ANTÍGONA – If that is the type of conversation you prefer, it will be best to wait for Antonio. Really, asking whether I know what is in store for me! One has to be an idiot!

ADÁN – Pedro and Juan are a bit stupid, and I beg you forgive them.

ANTÍGONA – No, you do not have to apologize for them, but being asked about my expectations puts me in a bad mood.

PEDRO – I don't know why. I think it is normal to ask what each one of us expects.

ANTÍGONA – I think it is more human to ask what each one of us *is*.

JUAN – Very well, I will play along. As far as I am concerned, I already know what I am; I am a revolutionary!

PEDRO – As am I as well!

JUAN – And you? What are you?

ANTÍGONA – I am a human being

JUAN – (*Laughing*). Well, aren't you funny!

PEDRO – If you were to ask an ass what it is, and the ass could answer, it would say it is an assnal being.

JUAN – And the world would keep being the same.

ANTÍGONA – No, it would not keep being the same, because if the ass had consciousness of self, he would feel the whips and strikes received by all other asses as his own.

JUAN – And it would bray full of pain.

ANTÍGONA – And he might perhaps attempt a revolution!

JUAN – Aren't you a complete... Do you think revolutions just come out of nowhere? This is exactly what I thought about you without even meeting you. As a good bourgeois, you have a sentimental concept of revolution. Bah!

PEDRO – Listen, beloved comrade, you better understand that revolution is not a romantic concept, but it is a technique, a discipline, and a closed rank. For this reason, revolution would be impossible without the Party. Think you can understand this very simple thing?

ADÁN – She can understand it and admit it!

ANTÍGONA – You and I have discussed this already...

ADÁN – Discussed, yes, but without getting anywhere. And now you see it: we just got here and the subject pops up yet again.

ANTÍGONA – Then let it pop up!

JUAN – We will leave it, but if you don't agree with certain elemental matters, you are better off leaving an apology for Antonio. We'll let him know you couldn't stay because you had to go to a cocktail party or something like that; we'll apologize for you, don't worry.

ANTÍGONA – You are mad if you think I will leave. I have it all figured out, and I will be staying. What are you expecting? That I admit that the Party is revolution's instrument? Well consider it admitted! Let us serve ourselves with this instrument!

JUAN – Wrongly stated. Completely wrongly stated! Are you suggesting the Party should serve us? Did it ever occur to you that we should be the ones to serve the Party?

ANTÍGONA – We can serve each other!

JUAN - (*Incisive*) No, we will not serve each other! You will serve the party! You will discipline yourself in every regard! You will do what it commands! And you will do it blindly! Understand?! Blindly!

ADÁN – Antonio has told you a hundred times that we are instruments of a better world.

ANTÍGONA – (*Twisting in anger*) And a hundred times I asked him to no longer speak those words! And you, Adán, do not speak them either! Forget them!

JUAN – Forget them? You're insane! We are aware of what we are. I don't see why we should forget them!

ANTÍGONA – Because man should not be man's instrument! That is the way things are in my world, and that is why I am here now. But I am not willing to leave that world just to fall into the same pit! You will not accomplish that! In order to build a new world, it is necessary to examine our past, and I intend to convince Antonio of this very thing. I will convince him one day; do not doubt it for a second...

PEDRO – (*Conciliatory*). I am afraid you might be a bit lost, comrade, since that problem which bothers you is of no concern here. What matters here is taking advantage of the circumstances which will bring about the day of revolution. For the end we seek, every mean is good. It seems you don't know Antonio!

ANTÍGONA – I know him, and I think I know him very well.

JUAN – Well if you know him, remember that he is in command here, and that his orders are obeyed without discussion. That should go without saying!

ANTÍGONA – I consider myself well aware.

PEDRO – Better be, so then you should understand the rest as well.

JUAN – Have you ever met a true fanatic?

ANTÍGONA – I have met a few and liked none.

JUAN – Well, among us you will meet many, and you will have to like it. You cannot want revolution and not like those who give their entire lives for it. You cannot want revolution and not like Antonio, for example...

ANTÍGONA – Antonio made it possible for me to take this step; I do not think I should say anything else.

JUAN – Well, it's not enough! If you think Antonio can take on the role of your spiritual advisor, you are sorely mistaken. You can listen to a spiritual advisor, and later, if you feel like it, you can go off and live your best life. That is not the case with Antonio: him you will have to obey blindly; his will shall be yours!

ANTÍGONA – We will see about that!

JUAN – In that case... (*three knocks are heard at the door*). He is here! Go on, Adán, open the door!

ANTONIO – (*Entering with a briefcase under his arm*). Good evening to all. Any new business?

ADÁN – Just one: Antígona.

ANTONIO – She is not new. Cheers, Antígona! Everything in order?

ANTÍGONA – It is, although I do not think I'm very well liked here.

ANTONIO – Bah! They will grow to like you! They won't need too much time for that...

PEDRO – Well, she is exaggerating; we have certainly said a few things, but without any ill will towards her...

ANTONIO – I understand. Adán, get me a cup of coffee to sweeten my lips; and now things will be much easier; much, much easier!

JUAN – You said that very same thing with Flora!

ANTONIO – I forbid you to speak of Flora!

ANTÍGONA – Flora? Who was Flora?

ANTONIO – Forget about Flora, who was a great comrade despite everything. She saw our future through rose-colored glasses!

JUAN – That rose-colored future forms part of our literature. Based on that literature we fill our group with useful idiots. Fortunately, the revolutionary profession is more than just literature...!

ADÁN – Or something less...

ANTONIO – Quiet!

ANTÍGONA – These men were telling me about you. And what a picture they paint of you, by the way!

ANTONIO – They would speak well, I believe.

ANTÍGONA – Do you like being feared?

ANTONIO – I like to be obeyed.

ANTÍGONA – Your favorite topic of conversation!

ANTONIO – I don't know what you mean, but if this is about some discussion I interrupted, I rather not renew it when we have such an important plan in our hands.

JUAN – Careful, Antonio, let's not do anything stupid...!

ANTONIO – Forget about it. Ever since we lost Flora, I have had no desire greater than getting her back, and I feel that with Antígona we will gain her back.

ANTÍGONA – Flora!

ANTONIO – Yes, Flora; I already told you to forget about her. Now, let's get to work!

JUAN – You are going to let her in on this from the get go?

PEDRO – Juan is right, our haste should not make us careless.

ANTONIO – Do you think me capable of something stupid?

PEDRO – No, it's not that, but...

ANTONIO – Then we will move forward. Within the Party it has been determined that we will act, and I want to assume you will have no objections...

JUAN – What about her?

ANTONIO – She will act too.

ANTÍGONA – That is why I am here.

ANTONIO – Perfect.

JUAN – Fine. (*With resignation*). What about the main issue?

ANTONIO – (*To Adán*). Did you manage to get our little present?

ADÁN – (*He takes to the table the package he left in the corner upon entering*). Yes, it's right here. I already tested the timer and the detonator; everything works perfectly; there will be no problems on that front.

ANTONIO – And the explosive charge?

ADÁN – I will load it tonight; It will be ready by tomorrow morning.

ANTONIO – Good. And you, Pedro, have you confirmed everything?

PEDRO – Everything; the train will arrive tomorrow at noon via the Northern Station.

ANTONIO – (*To Antígona*) That is the train I told you about...

ANTÍGONA – Yes, the special train, the one full of important people, but I do not understand, as you did not quite explain...

ANTONIO – I told you it would arrive at that Convention...

ANTÍGONA – I get that, but...

ANTONIO – I left out that we have orders to pay them a fright, and that we will do it.

ANTÍGONA – I am starting to understand...

ANTONIO – Of course, you are not stupid! You will see! The first effect of this attack will be that of instigating mistrust among the people, especially since the police will lose all trace immediately. This attack will be followed by others, as many as are necessary for us to be respected through fear. If we have not succeeded in making ourselves loved, we will succeed in making ourselves feared, and quickly!

JUAN – Do you intend to explain our plans further while she's still here? I must be really closeminded since I don't understand why you do things in this way!

ANTONIO – You do not understand because it presupposes something you still do not know. (*To Adán*). Did you see Fausto?

ADÁN – I sure did, and he is ready. Without a doubt, he is well versed in the use of these devices.

ANTONIO – (*Taking up the device*). Bah! It does not require much knowledge; you adjust the timer to a specific time; you wind it; once it is in place you flip the alarm switch, and two minutes later...well it's wake up time. It boils down to that!

PEDRO – I also saw Fausto. He told me he would be here at 10:00.

ANTONIO – Well, we won't be needing him.

JUAN and PEDRO – What do you mean?

ANTONIO – He doesn't know that Antígona will be taking his place.

JUAN – What what?

PEDRO – Antígona?

ANTONIO – It's as you just heard!

ADÁN – I told you: full blown scandal!

ANTÍGONA – (*She walks forth as if she wished not to understand*). What are you trying to say?

ANTONIO – Exactly what you suspect; that we have prepared a great test for you right from the start. Only you can fill the void left by Flora, and you will do it better than Fausto, with reduced risks for everyone involved, since no one will suspect you. You hate the status quo just as much as I do, and your passion for justice and freedom is possibly even greater than

mine. A hundred times you have said you could wait no longer, and when I proposed opening this door for you, you swore not to back down from anything. You could not do it now; I have put my trust in you, in your great revolutionary passion, and you could not betray me now. It would be just like betraying yourself at the decisive moment!

ANTÍGONA – You expect me to take that thing to the train?

ANTONIO – Yes, in that purse of yours: look how nicely our little gift fits in here! And furthermore, no one will suspect that you are taking it on board. But of course, it won't be enough to take it on board; it is imperative that you detonate it precisely next to the staircase of the penultimate car. The most important people will descend from there...

ADÁN – Without a clue as to what awaits them.

ANTÍGONA – (*Indecisive, looking at Antonio from head to toe*). And if I refuse?

ANTONIO – You will not refuse! If you want revolution, you will have to like the means which lead to it. Our command has decided to support our guerrillas with a calculated system of terror. We grow ever-weaker, too weak to attempt massive action, and therefore, we are to act individually or in small groups. But let us not worry without warrant; the masses will join us one day. In the meantime, we will make terrorist action the prelude to revolution. What, are you getting cold feet?

ANTÍGONA – No, I am not getting cold feet. I just did not expect that this would happen so suddenly.

ANTONIO – You have Flora to thank for that: if she were here, we would not have welcomed you so easily.

JUAN – But Antonio, this is madness; this one has no preparation at all. We had settled on Fausto!

PEDRO – I volunteered as well!

ANTONIO – I know that already, but it's not convenient. The station will be filled with hounds, and they will not suspect Antígona. Among all of you, Adán is the least known, and he will follow her closely in case he should prove useful. You, Pedro, and I will be in some place with many witnesses who can testify, should it be necessary, that on Wednesday the 20th of May at noon we were very far from the Northern Station.

JUAN – Madness! Well, whatever. (*To Antígona*). Weren't you just bursting to do something? Well, there you have it! And now, how do you feel?

ANTÍGONA – I feel bad.

JUAN – Obviously! A sentimental revolutionary! When you walked in, I remember saying that theorizing revolution is different from risking your neck. Imagine that. Your neck!

ANTÍGONA – I do not fear dying!

ANTONIO – Nor is dying part of the plan, at least not this time. You will not be one of the victims, and you can be sure of that so long as you follow the instructions I will give you. They are simple: you will simply blend in with the crowd at the time of the train's arrival, and you will then make your way to the penultimate car. Once no one is focused on you, you will leave the purse on the platform, next to the car's steps, and you will leave quickly, since you will only have two minutes to save your skin. Two minutes from the moment you flip the alarm switch and leave the purse on the platform. But don't worry, two minutes spent wisely are an eternity...

ANTÍGONA – Two minutes! (*Zoned out, as if in another world*). Two miserable minutes!

ANTONIO – (*With a deep voice*). There will be people who know you and who you know in the station; they will greet you and you will wave while acting completely normally. But do not lose sight of your objective: once the train stops, and those people start descending

you will leave the purse on the platform, as close as you can to the steps. Once you leave it, you will flip the alarm switch, and two minutes later...

ADÁN – The explosion!

ANTÍGONA – (*As if returning to her senses*). Quiet!

ANTONIO – Quiet?

ANTÍGONA – Yes. Please, say no more!

ANTONIO – (*Seizing her by the arm*). Just yesterday you claimed to be willing to do anything to bring about the social change we seek; just yesterday you were bursting with indignation from living amongst shit; just yesterday you were asking for a chance as if it were a grace. You seemed a new and marvelous Rosa Luxemburg. And now...you doubt?!

ANTÍGONA – (*Freeing herself from Antonio, reacting*). I do not doubt!

ANTONIO – Oh yes, you are doubting!

ANTÍGONA – I am not doubting, and I will do it!

JUAN – And what if you see your little friends among those people?

ANTÍGONA – (*Out of it*). That does not matter! I will do it!

JUAN – And what if you also find your father or your filthy mother?

(*Antígona retreats to the background of the set; her lost gaze moves from side to side, and she cannot articulate or form words.*)

ANTONIO – (*Slamming his fist on the table*). She will do it!

(*In the background, bells ring announcing the time. It is 10:00 o' clock.*)

CURTAINS

Act II

Same setting. Dimly lit. The Greek warrior with his shield, spear, and mask advances to the proscenium and addresses the audience.

WARRIOR – Under Creon's tyranny, young Antigone suffers over the mortal remains of her brother. Polynices is not to be buried, and the tyrant's edict is definitive (*he recites*).

*For him there are neither funeral rites nor laments.
No one is to offer him burial, and so let his body
be a feast for birds and dogs,
A lesson for those who see his misery.*

Polynices will not be able to rest in Hades because Creon's law decrees thus, but Antigone will save her brother from birds and dogs, and under cover of night she will carry out a symbolic burial. The tyrant reproaches:

You were aware of the proclamation which prohibited it? And you ventured to break such grave laws?

ANTIGONE – (*Appearing in the background*).

It was not Zeus who decreed them for me,

nor was it that justice which the gods of death
establish among men.
I did not think that your proclamations,
since man is mortal, could topple
the stern and unwritten law of the gods.
It is not today's or tomorrow's; it is law which
is eternally living, and no one knows when
it first appeared. I was not about to
open myself up for punishment from the gods
by violating this law, by cowering
before any mortal.

WARRIOR – Poor Antígona, exemplary maiden of my homeland! Polynices has entered Hades with her sacrifice paying the price. And she will descend to the dwelling of the dead fully alive.

ANTÍGONA

And now through prisons he takes me towards death without weddings, without a marriage bed,
without my share in the dreamed of joy
of the wife and mother, whose breasts
nurture tender offspring.
And so, what divine law must I have broken?
Miserable me! What do I seek from the gods?
What do I still await/hope for? Whom can I beg
to ease my toil, if my pious acts
have gained me only the name of impious?

(The Warrior and Antígona depart from stage slowly. Little by little the set is illuminated. Finally, Juan and Pedro burst through, both highly agitated).

JUAN – I told you! I told you a hundred times! May she be struck by lightning!

PEDRO – Please shut up! You might as well be shouting it on the street corner!

JUAN – Oh, Antonio, Antonio! And with all your experience! It's unbelievable! Did you see how he took the bait?! Like a complete novice!

PEDRO – I must admit it is not easy to forgive him (*-serving himself some coffee*), but it's also true that the girl really looked the part! She seemed to be the real deal!

JUAN – Maybe she seemed that way to you! As far as I'm concerned, she never convinced me. But...how was a little miss from *such good families* supposed to convince me? From such good families! (*Serves himself coffee*). Bah! Pure garbage, a bourgeois girl, at most she is good for going to mass at noon with her boyfriend. But of course, none of the blame falls on her; why would it fall on her?

PEDRO – I agree that the blame should fall on us, but nevertheless let us admit that for a moment she did leave us in awe/blind us with awe. She looked so resolved!

JUAN – Yes, resolved to play the revolutionary...

PEDRO – Well, the way the attack was planned was no game...

JUAN – Look, Pedro, you need to stop this nonsense; people like her are good for scaring their families and friends with what they deem 'progressive ideas'. Among the bourgeoisie

there are thousands of bugs with 'progressive ideas ...so very progressive... but this is just a fun way for them to pass the time. Beyond that they are not good for a goddamn thing; you see it now, as soon as it's time to put their skin on the line...

PEDRO – I admit that you were the only one here who was seeing clearly, but I must repeat that this is surprising coming from Antonio. Having me screw up is nothing surprising; I have labeled myself an idiot for some time now!

JUAN – We gain nothing speaking truths as if in a temple. Antonio can't be long now, so we will see what he has to say.

PEDRO – What he has to say and what precautions we are to take, don't you think?

JUAN – There will be no problems with the police, since nothing happened; the problem will consist of knowing what to do with our great discovery...

PEDRO – That's the thing, we need to know what to do in case she returns and in case she doesn't...

JUAN – She has to return!

PEDRO – How I doubt it!

JUAN – Well in that case we will have to bring her! Now I am actually interested in her company, even if it's just for a little while.

PEDRO – Sounds like you want to eat her raw...

JUAN – If only it were up to me...! But I doubt Antonio will want to take drastic measures.

PEDRO – Of course not; if nothing happened in the station, he will be satisfied so long as he can assure her silence somehow.

JUAN – And then send her the hell out of here!

ADÁN – (*Entering abruptly*). Hello! Is Antonio here yet?

JUAN – Antonio is not here, and neither is our oh so very famous revolutionary ...

ADÁN – So we're in the mood for ironies! Why don't we admit that we all shit the bed!

Antonio goes without saying! And as for your part (*to Pedro*), I saw how moved you were by her revolutionary fire. Are you going to deny it?

JUAN – I was never moved!

ADÁN – You weren't, but everyone else was! All that's left is that you put the blame on me!

PEDRO – That is not what this is about; we are just lamenting what happened.

JUAN – Or rather we are lamenting what did not happen...

PEDRO – That's how it is; nothing has happened here...

ADÁN – Truly nothing; nothing! If only you had seen it! I was at the station an hour before the train arrived; the whole space was filled with people enjoying themselves, as if they had suddenly become millionaires. And right now, they must be at that official banquet, wetting their filthy throats good champagne! Sons of...! They really lucked out today!

JUAN – They did not escape anything. Antígona left from here determined not to do it.

ADÁN – In that case, I don't understand why she did things halfway...

JUAN and PEDRO – (*Springing up*). What? What do you mean halfway? What are you trying to say?!

ADÁN – Of course she did it halfway. I already told you that I was at the station when the train arrived. The place was filled with people and music bands... Then after some time she got there with the purse over her shoulder...

JUAN – (*Shocked*). No! With the purse and the bomb?

ADÁN – Of course, with the whole thing!

PEDRO – Unbelievable!

ADÁN – She was very nervous, and I followed her for a while; once the train arrived, she blended in with the crowd; she was following Antonio’s instructions at every step of the way...I still managed to see when she placed the purse down and walked away...

JUAN – She left the purse and walked away? And then? Go on! What happened then?

ADÁN – She stopped out of nowhere. It was unbelievable...!

PEDRO – Oh the devil with...! Will you please finish!

ADÁN – That was it. She returned to the purse and picked it up; she must have then cut off the alarm and walked away calmly.

JUAN – But...Stupid! One thousand times stupid! Now I understand even less! And you’re saying she left the purse?...

ADÁN – I saw it with these very eyes of mine.

PEDRO – Strange! So very strange!

ADÁN – Something caused her to back down at the last minute. There is no doubt about that.

PEDRO – But what could it have been? I am bursting to know!

JUAN – I can imagine; some sort of last-minute bourgeois complex; you can be sure of that. The blood of her class made her stop herself when she was among those mammals that are nothing less than her equals.

ANTONIO – (*Also entering violently*). Hello!

ALL – Hello!

JUAN – We sure did well, didn’t we?

ANTONIO – No, I did well; I am the only one who is responsible.

JUAN – A thousand times I have said that we can’t trust those people as trench-mates. I wouldn’t even share bullets with them!

PEDRO – You are an old revolutionary, and you know things don’t always turn out how you plan them. Forget it!

ANTONIO – No, I will not forget this, and there is no room for apologies. Things have to turn out precisely as they have been planned. And when they do not turn out well, it’s necessary to establish responsibility. I am responsible. I studied her background and sustained contact for a period of time that should have been enough to get to know her. And the worst thing is that I thought I did know her! Now I see that I acted like a complete novice...like an idiot!

JUAN – Adán saw her make it all the way to the train cars, and he saw her leave the famous purse there ...

ANTONIO – I saw her too; in the end, I could not resist the urge to stop by.

PEDRO – How? You were there?

ANTONIO – Yes, I was there, and it’s true that she made it all the way up to the car and left the purse...

ADÁN – You see? And then she returned, threw it over her shoulder, and then left through the main entrance!

ANTONIO – That’s how it was. I was about to lose my composure! The damn bitch then left as if she had just accomplished something great!

PEDRO – And now? Because I’m assuming we will do something about this...

JUAN – Of course we will! At the moment, I don’t know what we’ll do, but we will have to do something. What do you think, Antonio?

ANTONIO – Right now, I can only think of how much I would like to have her here. But...why the hell did she turn back?

JUAN – We will know in due time. She’s probably off with some priest at the moment; I mean, with her spiritual advisor. Then...then later she will have time to turn us in...

PEDRO – That does not seem logical to me.

ANTONIO – To me neither, since she would have to explain some very inconvenient things about herself in order to turn us in, and that will force her to think very carefully about doing so ...

PEDRO – Remember that the police tend to forgive the penitent, especially when they turn out to be snitches.

ANTONIO – Yes, I do not doubt that about the police, but the society in which she lives and will continue to live would not forgive her. It was already making her life miserable before she came with us, imagine how it would be now! No, she will not turn us in; you can all be sure of that.

ADÁN – I think that too; she will now be quieter than a tomb.

PEDRO – She better, because if she opens her mouth, I won’t be responsible for my actions. But...what a nice story for Daughters of Mary! The story of a group of professional imbeciles and a silly girl who makes fools of them! It’s just so moving!

PEDRO – And to top it off she has a beautiful name, like the one from Sophocles.

JUAN – Don’t go telling me you went to school now! We’re not in the mood for that!

PEDRO – I’m not boasting or anything; I’m just thinking out loud...

JUAN – Well stop thinking!

ADÁN – And with such a demeanor she made it to the second to last car and left the purse on the platform!

ANTONIO – Will you all please be quiet! (*They cease quietly; Juan gets up for coffee and Antonio thinks, as if formulating a plan*). Adán, go out on the street and look for that girl.

ADÁN – But...

ANTONIO – No buts; you look for her and you bring her here. You will look for her in her house if you have to, wherever you might find her!

ADÁN – I don’t think she will be interested in seeing us...

ANTONIO – She won’t be, but it will be up to you to convince her. Go on! We will wait as long as we must, but do not return alone. Let’s go! (*Adán doubts; then, seemingly resolute, he walks to the door where he hesitates again*).

ADÁN – And do you think...

ANTONIO – Yes, I think she will come with you. Go on already!

(*Adán resolves himself to leave and opens the door, but as soon as he opens it, he stands still looking towards the end of the corridor*).

ADÁN – I won’t have to look for her...she’s coming.

PEDRO – Antígona? (*Adán nods*).

JUAN – Alone? (*Adán moves out of the way*).

ANTÍGONA – Gentlemen, good evening.

JUAN – We were just talking about you, cutie...

ANTONIO – Hello.

ANTÍGONA – (*Walking towards the table; she pulls the device from her purse and carefully places it on the table*). I have come to return something that does not belong to me, and I did not know how to use.

ANTONIO – You did not know?... Don’t you mean you did not want to use? ...

ANTÍGONA – You are right: that I did not want to use.

ANTONIO – For a very powerful reason...

JUAN (*Sarcastically*). – It must have been incredibly powerful!

ANTÍGONA – Indeed it was!

ANTONIO – We want to hear it.

ANTÍGONA – I would rather keep it to myself.

ANTONIO – We do not thing keep anything to ourselves around here!

ANTÍGONA – I will keep this!

JUAN – You will not! Speak, or else...! (*He steps forth menacingly, but Antonio cuts him off*).

ANTONIO – Speak!

ANTÍGONA – I would if I thought you could possibly understand!

JUAN – Do you judge us to be that stupid?

ANTÍGONA – I do not judge you at all.

ANTONIO – We will see about that later. I told you to speak already.

ANTÍGONA – I have very little to say; only that at the very last moment I saw clearly, I saw everything very clearly.

PEDRO – You saw what so clearly?

ANTÍGONA – That. The thing you would not understand.

ANTONIO – Would you mind explaining yourself? For hell's sake!

ANTÍGONA – There is not much to explain (*her voice grows faint*) not much at all...

JUAN – Well then explain it!

ANTÍGONA – (*Lost*). They were there too... they... next to the car's staircase.

ANTONIO – Are you referring to the police?

ANTÍGONA – (*Coming to her senses*). No, I do not care about the police!

ANTONIO – So then?

JUAN – But Antonio... did you forget that mommy and daddy would be around there?

ANTÍGONA – That should have been enough, but it was not for them! (*She pauses*). I did not see them; maybe I did not want to see them... but the children. They were so beautiful! The boys were carrying pennants and the girls flowers...

ANTONIO – The children? What damned children are you talking about?

ANTÍGONA – (*Turning to Adán for support*). You saw them too! Surely you saw them! Those children next to the car, singing songs...

JUAN – And you mean to say that because of those brats? Do you think we're stupid?

ANTÍGONA – Yes, it was for them! When I had set the purse and was leaving, one of those kids looked at me and smiled...I will never be able to forget that innocent smile!... it was the smile of a child that did not deserve to die. (*She pauses*). And I did not let him die!

JUAN – How romantic! You must surely be happy now!

ANTÍGONA – Happy! As if I had borne witness to Creation, when light was let be!

ANTONIO – Was that it?

ANTÍGONA – It was everything. And I would do it a hundred times for the smile of that child.

ANTONIO – To fuck up the entire plan for the sake of a child...! You're a goddamn... (*He approaches Antígona menacingly, but she defiantly stands up to him*).

ANTÍGONA – Don't you dare touch me! I will not allow that! If you take me for a coward, you are sorely mistaken! (*She takes the bomb from the table*). I do not lack the courage to burst this piece of junk, and you will see now! (*She raises the bomb with both hands to smash it on the ground*).

ALL – (*Pouncing on her*). Careful! Idiot! (*In a quick struggle, they disarm and shake her*).

JUAN – Crazy, stupid girl! Do you want to smash us like rats in a hole?

ANTONIO – (*Slapping her while Pedro and Adán hold her by the arms*). You cretin! I'll straighten you out!

ANTÍGONA – Cowards! You bunch of cowards! So afraid to die!

ANTONIO – (*Calming himself*). Hoy, let her go now! Nothing has happened here!

ANTÍGONA – And this is how you want to bring forth a new world?! A new world as a product of your workmanship? (*She laughs loudly*).

ANTONIO – (*Very coldly*). What would you know about that?!

ANTÍGONA – Surely you also intend to create a new man! Completely new!

ANTONIO – You lack revolutionary sensibilities, and the proof is there in everything that just happened. (*Serving himself some coffee*). At the last minute, you were betrayed by the prejudices of an exhausted morality...

ANTÍGONA – An exhausted morality?!

ANTONIO – Exactly: a morality that has not been able to better the world in 20 centuries...

ANTÍGONA – But surely you will improve the world with yours!

ANTONIO – Perhaps; for the moment, we are interested in revolution, not morality, and to get to revolution all paths are good.

ANTÍGONA – Those are not new ideas! They are ideas as old as human misery!

JUAN – You lack a revolutionary upbringing, and so you don't understand that the new world will bring a new man as well.

ANTÍGONA – (*Laughing*). New men! What you are saying is absurd! We do not need a new man; we need to ally ourselves with what man has wanted to be for centuries but has failed to become in the attempt. I do not know when it will be, but the day when man overcomes his own misery, on that day the greatest of all revolutions will have taken place. And that day will come!

ADÁN – I understand everything except for the thing that made you seek us out.

JUAN – How? You don't understand that? It's so very simple! She got so bored among her own people that she wanted to play at having progressive ideas. That was it! Is that not clear?

ANTÍGONA – How easily is the lack of scruples confused with progressive ideas!

JUAN – (*Resigning himself*). Here comes another dose of 'moraline'.

ANTONIO – Let her speak!

ANTÍGONA – Yes, let me speak so I won't be poisoned by unspoken words. And you, Adán, who does not know why I sought you out; I came because I was fed up, because I dreamed of a society without oppression, without exploitation, and without misery, and because I thought your path should also be my own. I was too naïve in thinking that a change in the social structure should be first!

ANTONIO – That is what comes first.

ANTÍGONA – No, that might come second in any case; the first thing is man.

ANTONIO – False. We will change the social structure, and the new man will come in addition.

ANTÍGONA – Again with the new man! Do you even have an idea of what a new man would be? Man's only novelty is that of being man and not a tool! That is his only novelty...being further and further away from being a thing, a miserable thing!

JUAN – (*Anticipating Antonio who was about to respond*). Wait, Antonio, let me say a few things to this idiot! 'Moraline' gives me nausea, especially when the moralizer comes from this one's world. I'm sure you will find plenty of examples of your new man there! You'll find them among the workers who rot in factories for a miserable wage. You'll find them among the hungry farm workers who migrate in search of a piece of bread! Will those be

your men who are not tools? Or maybe they're elsewhere, among the servants of an exploitative state and thieving politicians? Because that is the man of your world, the one who surely gives you the right to strike us with lectures based on a sense of morality that has us fed up. Fed up!

ANTONIO – Well said!

ANTÍGONA – Very well said indeed, and I joined you all because you speak so well! But you will not be the ones to salvage something worthwhile from mankind: As far as you are concerned, man is nothing more than an instrument!

ANTONIO – For us, to be is to be within the Party. For worldwide revolution!

ANTÍGONA – That is what I just said: tools. Miserable tools!

JUAN – Don't you think this has turned into a bourgeois meeting for freedom of speech?

ADÁN – (*Correcting him*). For freedom of thought and speech!

ANTÍGONA – Well let's adjourn this meeting. As far as I am concerned, there are no pending matters. Unless you are inconvenienced... (*Takes her purse, intending to leave*).

ANTONIO – (*Taking her by the arm*). Just a moment! We have already paid for our mistake, but you have not paid for yours. Wait! (*He sits down and writes on a piece of paper*). All done! Now, sign it!

ANTÍGONA – (*She takes the paper, reads it, and finally rips it up while laughing*). But this is a confession!

ANTONIO – That's what it is.

ANTÍGONA – And a false confession at that! (*She laughs again*).

ANTONIO – Why is it false?

ANTÍGONA – Because the attack failed only because of me, and here you attribute a miraculous intervention to my father at the last minute...

ANTONIO – You must sign it as is.

ANTÍGONA – All of this because you fear I may talk! Fear is another one of your little gods! But I will not speak, do not be afraid; I can swear it!

JUAN – Sign anyway.

ANTONIO – Sign it.

ANTÍGONA – Fine. If that is what you want. (*She signs*). There! Satisfied? No? Here you have another monument to the new world you will build. (*She hands the paper to Antonio*).

ANTONIO: And now, you are free to go back to your people.

ANTÍGONA: I will not go to my people.

ANTONIO: Go with God.

ANTÍGONA: ¿With God? But, Antonio, do you even realize?

ANTONIO – It's a figure of speech. Leave.

ANTÍGONA – I am leaving. And now I will see more clearly than ever before!

JUAN – What will you see, my little angel?

ANTÍGONA – I will see that history is full of mirages.

PEDRO – I'm starting to think you're pretty fun.

JUAN – So am I, and that's fine. Laughter should also fit into a revolutionary's life.

ANTONIO – Of course, and what's more: I invite you all to make of this incident a cause for joy. We are sane men, and a sane man knows how to laugh.

ALL – HA, HA, HA.

ANTÍGONA – (*Beginning her exit*). Idiots!

ALL – HA, HA, HA.

ANTÍGONA – You forget that man exists!

ALL – HA, HA, HA.

ANTÍGONA – No revolution on Earth will succeed if you forget that.

ANTONIO – Go with God or go to hell, whatever you prefer!

ANTÍGONA – (*From the door, defiant*). You forget that man exists! (*She leaves, slamming the door*).

JUAN – (*After some silence*). Man exists! Bah!

ADÁN – (*Regaining his spirits, with levity*). Anyone up for some dominoes?

ANTONIO – Let's do it! (They all sit at the table and shuffle the domino tiles).

ADÁN – (*Singing mockingly as an opera tenor*). Yooooou forget that maaaaan exiiiiists! (*He finishes with a coughing fit*).

PEDRO – Sixes starts!

ANTONIO – (*Setting down the tile*). It's out! **CURTAINS**

Creon's Law

Original play by Olga Harmony
Translation by Andrés A. Carrete

*Setting: Mexico at the dawn of revolution. Mexico, Spring of 1910.
Stage: divided into four parts that should not be too marked off. Rather, they should, together, form part of a single space. Two well defined areas such as Cristina's bedroom and a living room in Marco's estate. The other two will contain the choruses according to the director's discretion.*

Act I

Scene I Death

Rapid fire. Gunshots. Isolated screams. Lorenzo's corpse. Enter Cristina. She seems ill.

CRISTINA – Why? Why? Why?

Pause.

CRISTINA – Why this, Dear God. Why?

Enter Isabel and Nana

CRISTINA – Why did they shoot, Nana?

NANA – Don't get involved, Cristina.

CRISTINA – We have to speak with Uncle Marcos. We cannot leave Lorenzo unburied
(*whispers*).

ISABEL – Uncle Marcos would not listen to us.

CRISTINA – But Francisco and Lorenzo were like brothers to us. Isabel. Remember when we used to play together, and when Francisco taught us to ride horseback. We would spend our afternoons chatting...

NANA- That was a very long time ago.

CRISTINA – But we remember those times so well. Nana, all of us cannot have changed so much.

NANA – Nothing has changed too much, Cristina, you all simply grew up.

CRISTINA – This is not growing up. Growing up is not shooting at people, nor is it calling soldiers, nor is it hating each other when we used to love one another.

ISABEL – Calm down. We cannot do anything.

CRISTINA – This is what it means to grow up then. It is realizing the things you once ignored, that the people you see every day, the people you help, are not your friends. And that you...we...people like us can shoot them. We can call the troops, and we can make the

troops kill them, even when we were brothers as kids. We can kill them, Nana, and what can they do?

ISABEL – They can dislike us, Cristina. We saw this last Thursday.

CRISTINA - Who is guilty then, and what are they guilty of? Who fired upon those people? And Lorenzo, what happened with Lorenzo?

ISABEL – (*Uncertain*). The troops were the ones that fired.

NANA – Leave it alone, Cristina. Stop asking.

CRISTINA - I want to know what they were doing there, in my uncle's land, and why this is all happening. I just want to know, Nana, there is nothing wrong with that.

ISABEL – Uncle forbade us from leaving the house today. He did not want us to know anything.

CRISTINA – I peered outside. I saw everything, but I understand nothing.

NANA – It is better that way.

CRISTINA – Because I see you in the house all the time, I think you a part of it. But today, I am sorry Nana, I have just seen you as something else, as a different being. You are from that place, right? You are one of them. We forgot it, but it is true. You are one of those women from the pueblo.

NANA – I was, at some point, a girl from the pueblo. Now I hardly know whose I am or where I come from.

ISABEL – My sister is right. I sense a part of you that is not ours, a part that links you to those houses from which we were rejected.

CRISTINA – And to those men and women who happen to be our enemies.

NANA – Enemies! Not yours, in any case. But it is true, there is a part of me that does not belong to you, even though you are practically all I love. It is something that could not be excised from me, not when they brought me as a child, nor once I was older, when you were entrusted to me, orphans, so that I could take care of you. That tiny part of me is the only thing I keep from my people. For that reason, please, allow me to be quiet.

CRISTINA – We will learn the truth anyway, but we would rather hear it from you.

NANA – Well... it so happens that in the past, my people had some land, and that land was lost.

ISABEL – It was lost? How?

NANA – (*Reluctantly*). It was lost.

CRISTINA – Fine. Do not tell us if you do not want to. But do tell us what happened.

NANA – There is not much more to tell. It is a simple story. Now they do not have land, nor do they have a place to farm. They are dying of hunger.

ISABEL – But that is horrible! We must speak with the Priest, with the Sisters...

NANA – (*Very softly*). It is an old matter. I think everyone is aware.

CRISTINA – But if they are hungry, why did they reject our help last Thursday?

ISABEL – We could probably...

NANA – They had grown accustomed to hunger.

ISABEL – How...?

CRISTINA – Nooo!

NANA – Don't be afraid. It's something people can get used to. The women, they got used to their children dying, to being abandoned by those who did manage to grow older. The men left to look for work elsewhere: they are peons in your uncle's estate and in those of others. Us girls who still played around were given away as a cargo-loaders, as kitchen girls... well, as that silent and withered army that serves you. Yes, we had already grown used to hunger, but some of the men who went away returned with other ideas...

CRISTINA – Go on.

NANA – And they talked. People thought they didn't have a reason to put up with hunger and misery. Then everyone from the pueblo asked for a fraction of their land from before, which now belongs to Don Marcos.

CRISTINA – And what did my uncle...?

NANA – He denied their request.

CRISTINA – But tell me...

NANA – They threatened to enter that small patch of land by force, that one just to the south by the old road, the one left untilled, so they could work the land and raise their animals.

CRISTINA – And did they enter by force? Is that why Uncle Marcos sent for the troops?

ISABEL – They forcibly entered land that did not belong to them? But that is stealing.

CRISTINA – Stealing?

ISABEL – Of course it is stealing.

NANA – They speak of it differently.

Enter Don Marcos

MARCOS – Cristina, Cristina, Cristina. Ah! You are all here. *(To Cristina)* Ignacio should not be long now, Cristina, and I want you to be the most beautiful bride in the world. And so, I want to give you this in advance, the necklace you will use on your wedding day. It was your mother's, you know? Made of diamonds and sapphire. *(He opens the case, very pleased)*.

CRISTINA – A necklace?

MARCOS – All of the women in our family have used it when they have married.

CRISTINA – But uncle, outside...

MARCOS – And I sent for a satin dress with silver clasps.

ISABEL – But the troops...

MARCOS – And a veil of Chantilly lace that looks like foam...

CRISTINA – Uncle, Lorenzo is dead out there...

ISABEL – Is it true that you will not allow them to bury him?

MARCOS – Nana, what have you been telling them?

CRISTINA – I saw it, uncle.

MARCOS – What do you mean you saw it?! Did I not forbid you from leaving the house?

CRISTINA – But I did not know that... I did not think that...

ISABEL – Uncle, do not get angry... we wanted to ask you to... uncle, out there...

MARCOS – Nothing is happening out there.

CRISTINA – Uncle, something is happening out there, and you are here talking to me about diamonds, satin, and lace.

MARCOS – Are you getting married or not? That is what one talks about with a bride to be.

CRISTINA – After killing a man? After shooting at defenseless people?

NANA – Cristina!

MARCOS – You are nervous, Cristina, but do not think about that anymore. My son and you have been engaged practically since you were born. Is it perhaps that you do not love him?

CRISTINA – Of course I love him, but that is not the issue, uncle. It is that I cannot think about these things when outside there are so many hungry and helpless women.

MARCOS – Had you never seen them before?

CRISTINA – No, I never saw them. I passed by their side without noticing. I knew nothing of their hunger; I had a veil over my eyes. I thought I was doing my part by taking things for them once in a while and by baptizing their children. And now I do not know, Uncle, now it is as if I hardly know them, as if all of those familiar faces were erased and left behind masks, masks with expressions that suddenly fill me with fear.

MARCOS – Do not fear them, I will not allow them to do you any harm.

CRISTINA – What about them?

MARCOS – What?

CRISTINA – Will you keep harming them?

MARCOS – Listen, Cristina, women should not involve themselves with these things.

CRISTINA – I am not getting involved, I am just asking.

MARCOS – And you do it with a certain tone, girl, that were it not for the fact that we are who we are, it would seem you are trying me.

NANA – Oh my God!

MARCOS – And to your questions I say: women need not involve themselves.

CRISTINA – Outside there are women who involve themselves.

MARCOS – Cristina!

CRISTINA – They went in with their men, carrying their children, seeking a piece of land to farm and to appease their hunger.

MARCOS – Do not defend them.

CRISTINA – I am not defending them. I am simply trying to understand, I want to understand. They go along with their husbands, they participate, they get involved, but Isabel and I and all of us are not supposed to do so. Why?

NANA – Because they are women, and you are still just little girls.

CRISTINA – I am about to get married, Nana. Will I be a woman then?

MARCOS – Maybe you are right. It is time for you to understand, so you will not live with such anxiety. I will explain the matter to you. Throughout my entire life, I have worked to increase the wealth that my father achieved with his work, based in turn on the legacy left to him by his father. For generations we have worked the land, cared for livestock, earned the prosperity we now enjoy. Ignacio will inherit from me, and he will continue working with our goods; by his own efforts he will increase our fortune for your children.

CRISTINA – But those people...

MARCOS – They are trying to steal the legitimate fruits of our labor. By force they break into our lands and intend to take it over.

ISABEL – Lorenzo is now dead, and he probably sought that end for himself, but would it not be possible for you to allow that he be buried?

CRISTINA – Yes, let him be buried. And the thing they ask for is a tiny untilled field to farm. Could you not just...?

MARCOS – Let them? There are things that one does out of principle, girls, even if it would seem there is nothing to gain. Do you know what would happen if I let them? It would establish a precedent that is not in our best interest, inconvenient not just to us but to all *hacendados* (estate holders) in the region, in the country. Soon all of them would be invading our lands, displacing us, slowly stripping us of everything we have gained through great sacrifice. I would not dare face such grave responsibility.

CRISTINA – (*Scared*) You do it because of principle! But the land... Nana...

Enter Jacinto

JACINTO – Miss Cristina, your friends are here to help you with weaving work for your bridal trousseau. They have been waiting for a while.

MARCOS – Come here, girl, my girl. Impress your friends from this very moment: Wear the necklace. (*He takes the necklace from its chest and puts it on the neck of a defeated and hesitant Cristina*).

Scene II

The ‘Donas’

Cristina’s room. Cristina and Isabel pretend to weave on large empty embroidery frames. The chorus of proper ladies, to the side, uses the same equipment. The nurse mends something while sitting.

LADIES – Here we are, preparing Cristina’s wedding. We are making a complete trousseau. We weave summer and winter clothes, the long petticoats, the lace undergarments, and those with embroidered strips. We embroider gauzes, linens, and cottons, house clothing, sheets with their initials. Cristina and Ignacio are hereby linked by our needles.

NANA – They love each other. It is only fair that the I for Ignacio support the C for Cristina.

ISABEL – And that the C for Cristina grow, enveloping the I for Ignacio.

LADIES – And that sweetly, when night falls, they should cover their rites of love with these auguries that now emerge from our agile fingers.

CRISTINA – How I long and wish for my wedding night!

LADIES – (*Laugh*) She would love to see herself under the blankets already.

NANA – Girls!

LADIES – Let us indulge ourselves, Nana. We are maidens, and our mothers teach us nothing of love, our older sisters smile with superiority once they marry: they tell us nothing. Shivering we approach the night on which we are to become women. We whisper with curiosity among ourselves, longing, desiring to be participants in the secrets of marriage. When will it be our turn?

CRISTINA – My night is approaching. I do not wish to talk about this. It will be a secret between Ignacio and me. It has nothing to do with you.

LADIES – You reject us. You are just like the others.

CRISTINA – It is not rejection, sisters, it is simply that some things are to be spoken of and others are not. Caresses are to be received and kept; they serve to build our love; to speak of them is to empty ourselves gradually.

LADIES – Reclining atop our linens, we dream of our weddings. We think of the masculine hands that advance towards us, that slowly draw us into bed. We see ourselves with our hair down, sweating, riding frenzied through the night. What, what is it like to love a man?

CRISTINA – We will all find out eventually.

A rumor is heard outside: Mr. Marcos, Mr. Marcos, for once listen to our voices.

LADIES – What is that? Cannot maidens gather without having their peaceful afternoons disrupted? What unknown voices come to disturb us?

NANA – They are the women from the pueblo who have come to try to speak to Mr. Marcos.

LADIES – Who gave them permission to come this far?

NANA – No one gave them permission. No one gives them anything.

CRISTINA – Rather they take from them.

WOMEN OF THE PUEBLO (VOICE) - Mr. Marcos, Mr. Marcos, for once listen to our voices. Although our eyes have never met when we have come across each other on the road, you, standing tall atop your beautiful horse, us bending over pots or furrows, we are more than an ant-like mass in your fields, more than yoked oxen, more than the land that can be left to wither until it becomes a wasteland, more than livestock in need of grazing. We are the women of the pueblo, Mr. Marcos, we are human beings even if poor and defenseless. What tone must we find for you to be moved and withdraw the soldiers? How should we speak to you, sir, so that you will allow our men to return and Lorenzo to be buried? We do not wish to beg, because our pleas have never been heard; neither are we here to demand because we have not learned to do so after years of servitude, and because we lack the necessary strength. Mr. Marcos, we simply wish for you to come outside and speak with us to see if any of our words hits the mark and dent your armor and mitigates our pain and your wrath, so that we may try to line our eyes directly with yours and you might see us, sir, and recognize that we are people too, we the women.

CRISTINA – (*Approaches Nana.*) Nana, will my uncle come out to speak to them?

NANA – They plan on staying until he does.

ISABEL – Let us hope everything gets resolved.

LADIES – Come, Cristina, pristine bride, return to your nuptials and rejoice. Forget those people from out there, those are matters for men.

-your uncle's

-my father's

-and mine

-and mine

-Come and forget. Pay no mind.

CRISTINA – And how to do it?

LADIES – Come, Cristina, and do not suffer on their account. Think only of your wedding.

CRISTINA – My wedding? How can you say... and those people... why? Why?

Scene III

The Promise

Cristina's bedroom. She is sitting, she gazes out the window without doing anything. Enter Nana.

NANA – Do not stay there motionless, Cristina, it can harm you.

CRISTINA – Why did they shoot at them?

NANA – You have asked everyone. Your uncle already answered: because they entered land that did not belong to them.

CRISTINA – Will they leave Lorenzo there? Will no one do anything to help them?

NANA – Child, do not torment yourself and torment us all.

CRISTINA – This is something unbearable. I do not understand how everyone else can go on living as if nothing had happened. Does it not hurt you?

NANA - (*Stern*). Yes, it hurts, but I do not believe you and I can do anything about it.

CRISTINA – Do you know Lorenzo and Francisco well?

NANA – (*Very simply*). Francisco is my godson.

CRISTINA – Nana! I know so little about you, so little about everyone!

Enter Ignacio

IGNACIO – Cristina, my love, you know not how I have missed you! (*Cristina stands up, but she does not approach*). What is wrong with you? Why do you not run to embrace me? (*To Nana*). What’s wrong? Is she sick?

NANA – I think so, Mr. Ignacio, hopefully you can cure her. (*Exits*).

IGNACIO – (*Approaches Cristina*) What’s wrong, Cristina?

CRISTINA – Did you just arrive from Mexico?

IGNACIO – Right this minute. I have not even gone to wash myself yet.

CRISTINA – And do you not now what is happening?

IGNACIO – No, for God’s sake, tell me.

CRISTINA – Out there a man lies exposed, rotting in the sun.

IGNACIO – (*He tears her away from the window.*) Get away from there, you should not be seeing that. I will tell my father to give you a different room.

CRISTINA - I do not see him, Ignacio. How could I possibly see him from this window? But he is there, and I know it, and that is enough. His body expands and swells and already maggots begin to appear. The vultures fly nearer, gliding lower every time, ready to burst his eyes with their pecking. The sun also takes its toll, as does the rain. It rained here yesterday, although very lightly, not enough for those people guarding the field to leave.

IGNACIO: I know, they told me along the road. But you should not let yourself be taken by morbid thoughts.

CRISTINA – But it is not my thinking about the corpse that offends me. He is Lorenzo, my old playmate.

IGNACIO – Do not try to go see him.

CRISTINA – No, I will not. For what reason would I go? They do not even let me get close. There are soldiers that forbid it, and the Nana watches me under my uncle’s orders.

IGNACIO – And from now I am also here to prevent it and to stop you from torturing yourself with those thoughts. (*He embraces her*).

CRISTINA – (*Absent.*) I love you, Ignacio, but I feel as if you were still far away.

IGNACIO – I am here, my love; I will not leave your side until our wedding day.

CRISTINA – (*Absent.*) The wedding? Right.

IGNACIO – What is the matter with you? When I left you, you could not think of anything else. Neither did I; I still think only of the moment when you will be mine.

CRISTINA (*Reacting.*) I love you so, so much. I have been yours for as long as I can remember. Ever since Isabel and I played with dolls, and I would leave them whenever you arrived so that I could chase after you because you would pay me no mind.

IGNACIO – (*Laughs.*) Look at all the mind I pay you now. Our roles have reversed; now I am the one that chases after you as soon as I sense that you have arrived, Cristina. I wish only to stay by your side, to care for you, and to protect you.

CRISTINA – (*She steps away*). I do not want to be protected anymore, Ignacio.

IGNACIO – What are you saying, crazy girl?

CRISTINA – That I do not want to be cared for if being cared for is keeping me here, locked away, in ignorance. I want to be your woman, your real woman.

IGNACIO – That is what I mean.

CRISTINA – No, I do not think we are talking about the same thing. I want us to do things together, to make decisions jointly. I want to be like the women from the pueblo.

IGNACIO – I do not understand.

CRISTINA – (*Becoming more animated.*) I want you to tell me the truth, to not hide anything from me, to listen to me, and for us to think the same thoughts.

IGNACIO – If that is everything, then I give you my word.

CRISTINA – It is not so easy, Ignacio.
IGNACIO – That sounds like a threat.
CRISTINA – I do not know to what extent it may be one.
IGNACIO – Well, I think you are trying to tell me something in a very roundabout way.
CRISTINA – You just promised...
IGNACIO – And I uphold that promise.
CRISTINA – In that case, tell me the truth: Do you think we can celebrate a wedding as if nothing had happened and be happy while the things that are happening keep happening?
IGNACIO – What?
CRISTINA – (*Disillusioned.*) You see, you have already broken your promise. You are once again treating me like a child.
IGNACIO – Are you referring to Lorenzo’s corpse?
CRISTINA – Among other things.
IGNACIO – You know that was my father’s order, and I never discuss/dispute his orders.
CRISTINA – And if I were to ask you...
IGNACIO – For your love’s sake, Cristina, do not ask me too much.
CRISTINA - ...to talk to him, only that you talk to him.
IGNACIO – For what, Cristina?
CRISTINA – I need it.
IGNACIO – Fine, I will do it. I will speak to my father. Are you happy now?
CRISTINA – Yes, also if you can explain something to me... You promised me, Ignacio...
IGNACIO – I uphold my promise.
CRISTINA – How did the people from the pueblo lose their land?

Darkness.

Scene IV **Progress**

Choruses of women and serious gentlemen.

WOMEN – They riddled us with wounds. The soldiers came in and fired upon us.
GENTLEMEN – The country is undergoing an unprecedented period of bonanza.
WOMEN – What harm were we doing? We were procuring a place to grow corn to feed our children.
GENTLEMEN – Money overflows. New avenues of communication and highways are being constructed.
WOMEN - They pushed us out of our land. It was our only hope.
GENTLEMEN – There is construction everywhere. We have beautiful French homes and fertile fields and livestock.
WOMEN – A bit of tortilla, a small amount of beans, something to give to our children. Milk, we never have...
GENTLEMEN – We drink imported wines, and we now know about international cooking. Our children go to the best schools; they learn to speak other languages.
WOMEN – Our children die young and tender. We hardly manage to raise them.
GENTLEMEN – (*They fold their newspaper.*) This is all excellent. No one has reason to complain.

WOMEN – We want to eat. We want jobs for our men and for our children to grow up healthy and to go to school.

GENTLEMEN – (*They fan themselves with the newspaper.*) Cannot get any better. Things cannot get any better. And still there are people that speak of a crisis?

WOMEN – We want to live. We cannot bear that this valley of tears appears so long, so wide, so unending.

GENTLEMEN – Business is going swimmingly, and it can be no other way because...

WOMEN – A road that leads us nowhere, sown with crosses, an enormous cemetery...

GENTLEMEN – Private industry is the right arm of the country's progress. It always has been.

WOMEN – Why do they take from us the last piece of bread and send the troops to fire upon us?

Enter Don Marcos.

MARCOS – The soldiers fired in accordance with the law. If a man happened to die, those responsible are the men who invaded my land and who are now fleeing.

GENTLEMEN – (*Reading again.*) How? What is this? (*One by one.*) Did you see? The leader of a group of bandits fled after inciting some ignorant field workers to take possession of land that does not belong to them.

WOMEN – Lorenzo lies dead, abandoned in a field where we are not allowed to enter.

MARCOS – As long as those responsible for this mess refuse to appear, the corpse will remain unburied, exposed to the vultures.

Enter the Priest, he stands beside Don Marcos.

WOMEN – Mister Priest, do not allow Lorenzo's corpse to remain without a Christian burial.

PRIEST – The church cannot intervene against the established order.

GENTLEMEN – (*They use the newspaper as a threatening weapon.*) A firm hand, an iron fist against the bandits, the insurgents, the enemies of our progress.

MARCOS – If the pueblo wants to see its dead buried, let it reveal Francisco's hiding place.

MUJERES – Have mercy for our sake, the mother, Lorenzo's pregnant wife.

PRIEST – (*He extends his arms towards them.*) Resignation, my daughters, resignation.

Darkness.

Scene V Good Wine

The hacienda's living room. Don Marcos and then Ignacio.

IGNACIO – (*Kisses his father's hand.*) Dad, I have come to greet you.

MARCOS – (*Laughs.*) In second place.

IGNACIO – Are you angry that I ran to see Cristina first?

MARCOS – (*Good-natured.*) No, son, no. You already know how hard I work for your wedding. (*They settle down.*) I cannot stay on my feet for too long because my gout gets to me.

IGNACIO – Does it hurt much? They say it is the result of living a good life.

MARCOS – (*Laughs.*) It is not the result of living a bad one. When the pain is strong, it makes me regret my sins in a way that the priest cannot. But as soon as I feel better, I go back to my old ways; at my age there are few pleasures left other than eating and drinking whenever we feel. You do not know how sorry I am that I cannot toast to your arrival with you. But you... (*He screams.*) Jacinto!

IGNACIO – Do you need something? Let me know if I can do anything for you.

MARCOS – No, just wait.

Enter Jacinto.

MARCOS – Bring Mr. Ignacio a bottle of that wine they sent me yesterday. (*Exit Jacinto.*) You will taste it and you will let me know whether or not I am improving my cellar.

IGNACIO – Thank you, dad, but...

MARCOS – Do you not like wine? Then? Drink, delight, enjoy while you are young; you have the means to build your life as you please. Through your veins runs the sap of a vigorous tree. I would know. All the men in our family have known how to enjoy a cup, a woman, or an estate.

Enter Jacinto with the wine. He serves it and leaves.

IGNACIO – (*He tastes to conciliate.*) It is very good, truly. (*He drinks, then pauses.*) Can I talk to you?

MARCOS – Did you have a good trip? Did you see the lawyer?

IGNACIO – Yes, everything is in order.

MARCOS – Good, these days there is a need for a mountain of papers and for everything to be properly legitimized. One has to protect oneself. Fields and land are not enough; it is necessary to have deeds, signatures, rivers of ink. (*He laughs.*) Now we have to irrigate our paperwork as well as our land. Us landowners become businessmen, atop a horse by day, behind a desk by night. But anyway, is everything settled?

IGNACIO – Yes, dad, and I am very grateful to you.

MARCOS – It is nothing, nothing, my son. It is only right that you have something to call your own now that you are about to get married. It is understood that you will inherit everything as soon as I die. (*Somber.*) When I die soon.

IGNACIO – Let us not talk about that, please.

MARCOS – No, you are right; we should never talk about that. May it come to us when we least expect it, but in the meantime, hush, we should not call its attention with our words. As if it were not awaiting us or aware of us. Isn't that right? (*He tries to compose himself.*) But have another glass in my stead, go on, do it for me because I cannot. (*Pensive.*) Gout is the only thing... (*He regains his jovial presence.*) Because in every other sense I am as strong as a bull; your father is an old stallion, were you not aware?

IGNACIO – That he is. (*He pauses for a long time while he refills his glass. He does not drink.*) I would like to know what happened during my absence. I am referring to the presence of the troops on our land.

MARCOS - Do not worry; a few issues with the Indians, but we have always had problems with them.

IGNACIO – They tell me there is a corpse on the field and that you are forbidding them from burying it.

MARCOS – (*Abruptly.*) Of course I forbid it! They come and threaten me in my own house, and then I make use of my rights and call the troops as I have done in the past. But this time they do not get scared, do you understand? Instead, they invade my field, they invade my properties, just as simply as I am explaining this to you. The troops fire, there is a dead man, the leaders flee, and then I tell them: “Tell me where the leaders are, and I will allow you to bury your dead”. And that is it. I have the legal right. Otherwise, the governor would not have sent troops on my behalf, and he would not support their presence now.

IGNACIO – But that is a terrible right to have, father, even if it is your right.

MARCOS – (*Threatening.*) What, what?

IGNACIO – (*Cowering.*) It is just that we are all shaken, please understand, dad. Cristina is genuinely afflicted.

MARCOS – Ah, the girl!

IGNACIO – Consider that I am about to get married and that it is very ill-omened to marry among troops and unburied corpses.

MARCOS – It would be far more ill-omened if that ball of Indians had the right to enter your land whenever they pleased.

IGNACIO – But there must be some other option, another way to...

MARCOS – Your issue is that you are worried about Cristina.

IGNACIO – Yes, that is partly true. I promised her that I would talk with you about all of this because I found her in very poor spirits when I returned.

MARCOS – A word of advice? Get married, but get married right away, and you will see how quickly she will move past all this. Why would she be worried about people she barely knows. It is because of the wedding. It is precisely because your wedding day is so near that she acts this way, even if she does not wish to accept it. If her mother were alive, if she had an older woman by her side that was not ignorant like that Nana, her situation would be very different. Education provokes fears and anxieties in maidens when they are headed towards marriage, which is more important for them than it is for us. They say that a woman’s life can be divided in two periods; before and after marriage, it is the husband who educates. Keep that in mind. Do not let yourself be disturbed by Cristina’s fears, which are the fears of every girl; remember that they are softer than we are, more sensitive. (*He sighs.*) Maybe that is why we love them so much.

IGNACIO – (*Doubtful.*) It is possible that you are right, but before Lorenzo’s thing happened, Cristina seemed very happy and thought only about the moment in which we would be married.

MARCOS – Because that moment was still far off, that is all. The time is now drawing near, and she has no one by her side to counsel her; pay little mind to her nerves and any other thing.

IGNACIO – I think that Cristina has been affected because she is soft and sensitive, as you say. But I also think that what is happening right now has to affect all of us, one way or another.

MARCOS – Why?

IGNACIO – What do you mean ‘why’?

MARCOS – Why does it affect you, for example?

IGNACIO – Well, it may be because Lorenzo was an Indian, and one gets used to seeing Indians without paying much attention to them, to let them half live by our side and work our lands, or to serve us in some other way. But that is very different from killing them or having them killed. That is why I am affected; because my father ordered that they fire upon other people.

MARCOS – Should I have let them fire upon me instead? Rather they would not fire because they have no weapons and would not dare to do as much. But should I have let them take what is ours without defending it? Is that what you want?

IGNACIO – Forgive me, dad, but there is a question I want to ask you, if you will allow it.

MARCOS – Ask whatever you want.

IGNACIO – The land they ask for, is it ours or...?

MARCOS – The lands are ours. If you must know, they were theirs once, but they lost them because they did not know how to work them or retain them. If you are so worried about legality, I can show you the papers that confirm they are mine. I acquired them for you, for all of you, just like everything else I acquire. And you never wondered where your studies came from, your luxuries. It is precisely now, when I am forced to fight to preserve what we have for the first time, that you show yourself to be very sensitive. Tell me, son, how do you think a fortune is amassed in this country? And not just that; since you are now questioning everything, ask yourself whether it is better for the fields to be poorly cultivated indefinitely, or whether it is better for them to be under the care of those of us with the proper means to work the fields in a scientific manner. I am speaking of an honorable way of working, thinking about the country's progress, about the future, not just about yourself, or about me, or about the fieldworkers. You are young, you are educated, you must think big, without foolish selfishness or false sensitivities.

IGNACIO – I was simply asking a question.

MARCOS – And I am simply responding with the truth at the forefront. (*Long pause.*) But you have not drank from your glass.

IGNACIO – I still have a few things to do today, dad; I do not wish to drink any more. (*He stands and gives his glass to Don Marcos.*) Although you were right about that; your wine is very good. (*Exits.*)

DON MARCOS – (*He rotates the cup.*) I would like to know what is wrong with these kids. (*He drinks unconsciously.*)

Darkness.

Scene VI **The Difference**

The Nana and Cristina in Cristina's room. The chorus of women in another area.

CRISTINA – Are they still out there?

NANA – They are constantly standing guard. They take turns with some old person so that there will always be a group. Yesterday your uncle ordered that the field be closed off with a wire fence, and they have remained there, clinging to the wires, preventing the children from approaching.

CRISTINA – What do they hope to accomplish.

NANA – I think they simply hope.

CRISTINA – I am afraid even to think about them. I remember the last time I saw them and the way they looked at me. Was that hate, Nana? (*Dismayed.*) I do not even know how to recognize hate.

NANA – Perhaps it was the choice they had already made that closed off their faces. It is not always possible to smile and give thanks, Cristina.

CRISTINA – I understand that. I do not understand everything, but I get that. I am Don Marco’s niece, and even with all of that, I cannot bring myself to think that they are my enemies.

WOMEN – We are your enemies.

NANA – No, that is not possible. She is a good and sweet child, who is not even capable of recognizing hate.

WOMEN – Because she has never had the need to feel it. Because she has grown surrounded by safety and care. Because she came into life as if it were a party. Because she does not know hunger, nor a cold bedding, nor the need to give thanks for a piece of hard tortilla. Ah! That damned thanking and smiling for everything: ‘Yes, sir.’ ‘Thank you, ma’am’.

CRISTINA – You hate me for what I have given you?

WOMEN – We hate you for what you have and have received without deserving it, without working, without even having to be thankful.

CRISTINA – (*Curious.*) What does it feel like to hate?

WOMEN – We will try to explain it to you, even though we are ignorant women. Would you understand, perhaps, if we told you about despair and hunger? If we told you that hate is born when you have nothing left, because you have only ever had one thing, a little thing, at some point, and even that has been lost? Would you be capable of understanding?

CRISTINA – I would try.

WOMEN – Well then try to hate us. We are the cruelest threat to your happiness, the cloud that looms over the stupid satisfaction with which you say, ‘yours and mine’.

NANA – Do not threaten her. To what extent can one really say who is a victim and who is an abuser?

WOMEN – To the extent where we can say, this one has and this one does not.

CRISTINA – I am somewhat afraid of you, but I cannot hate you. I want to understand you, I want to call you my sisters.

WOMEN – Sisters!

CRISTINA – How I wish I could have called Lorenzo my brother, with whom I played on many occasions when we were children.

NANA – It is true; as a child you played with Lorenzo and Francisco. There was no hate or differences then; you were simply children.

WOMEN – We know. The children of rich estate owners always play with our children. Sometimes they give them the toys they no longer want, other times they give them candy. The rich estate owners are not opposed to this, provided that our children are clean, courteous, perform small jobs for them, and keep their distance. Yes, we know how your children play with ours; it is yet another reason for which we must show ourselves to be subserviently grateful.

CRISTINA – When we were children, I cared deeply for Lorenzo and Francisco.

WOMEN – And once they grew?

NANA – You know very well that our paths always diverge from those of the rich.

WOMEN – Then let us not remember childhood, since it has left us nothing in common.

CRISTINA – And yet, we are women, and there must be something we have in common.

WOMEN – You might not be evil or culpable. When you live as you do, it is easy to be good and innocent. But you are too different from us, as if you were from another country or another world.

CRISTINA – Why is that? Do we not live under the same sky?

WOMEN – You in a beautiful home. We live in miserable huts.

CRISTINA – Am I not made of flesh? Do I not bleed like you do? How are our bodies any different?

WOMEN – Yours is beautiful and polished, clean, wrapped in beautiful garments. Can you say the same about us?

NANA – Careful! That sounds a lot like envy.

WOMEN – We do not envy anymore. We used to, when we were very young. We would see her pass by on her car with her sister, and we would ask ‘why do they ride on a car, mom? How come they do not have to make tortillas or care for brothers? How come they can have jewels and dresses and go to balls.’ At that time, we were envious.

NANA – And now?

WOMEN – Now it is not envy, woman. Now we know the answer.

NANA – I fear for her.

WOMEN - We feel for you because you love her, but we cannot share your feelings.

CRISTINA – One day my womb will birth children, and my pain will be as sharp as yours.

WOMEN – You will have children, yes, but they will be strong and healthy, with a doctor at your bedside and nurses to feed them in case you have no milk or do not want to deform your breasts.

CRISTINA – I love a man, and I will know pleasure with him. I will care for a family. Is it so different to do it in a hut instead of a house?

WOMEN – Yes, it is that different.

CRISTINA – I can love, I can birth, I can feel fear and affliction before death. I can fall ill, lose a loved one, and suffer other misfortunes. I can smile with joy at a child’s babbling. Is it perhaps that you cannot?

WOMEN – We can.

CRISTINA – In that case, by God, what makes us so different that you deny me even the most miserable of acknowledgments?

WOMEN – What did they have to eat at your house today, Cristina?

Darkness.

Family Evening

The living room. Don Marcos and Ignacio. Later, Cristina.

MARCOS – (*He paces angrily.*) It is all well and good that she is nervous, that she is young, that we need to be patient with her, but must she ruin all of our meals?

IGNACIO – Dad, you exaggerate. Just because she had a crying spell today.

MARCOS – Today a crying spell; yesterday a crisis. And her mutism, that eternal mutism, as if she were a professor of I-do-not-know-what order or convent.

ISABEL – If you would like, I can try speaking to her. We are very different, we do not always understand each other, but we are sisters, and it hurts me to see her in that state.

MARCOS – No, Isabel, you are the sensible one, the reasonable one, but you are the younger one; she would not listen to you at all. If it is a matter of talking to her, I need to be the one to do it.

IGNACIO – Let her be, dad, let her calm down. I am afraid this would cause her more stress. What we ought to do is try to distract her a little.

MARCOS – (*Ironic.*) Have we not all tried to do just that? Have you, her boyfriend, not paid special attention to her? And how great are your results! At the slightest word she clenches

her hands as if she were squeezing her blame out, or she responds with that absent air she has had for the last few days.

IGNACIO – What if she is sick, dad? Our duty is to help her, regardless of our love for her, because we are the only family she knows.

MARCOS – We will help her. *(To Isabel.)* Go get her.

IGNACIO – *(Scared.)* Now?

MARCO – *(Authoritative.)* Now. *(To Isabel.)* Go look for her, I say. *(Exit Isabel.)*

IGNACIO – Dad, do not provoke her. She is very shaken.

MARCOS – What are you afraid of?

IGNACIO – I do not know. I do not even want to know. It is like she has become a different person, like she is no longer the Cristina we know and love.

MARCOS – Do you no longer love her?

IGNACIO – Of course I do, but I am waiting for her to recover, for her to return from that foreign country where she now wanders all the time.

MARCOS – What about her? Does she still love you?

IGNACIO – I am the link that connects the Cristina that used to laugh and the Cristina that cries. She loves me, dad, you can be sure of that.

MARCOS – You ought to know who you are marrying. You got engaged to a sweet, happy, and loving woman. Will you have a dark and melancholy woman as a wife?

IGNACIO – Do not be so hard, dad.

Enter Isabel and Cristina.

MARCOS – Come join us. Only a few occasions remain for you to join us with the freedoms of a single woman. Have you calmed down?

CRISTINA – Yes, uncle.

MARCOS – Put aside your somber air. You have only reasons for joy, on the eve of your wedding, surrounded by all of us who care about you. We care about you, Cristina. Are you aware?

CRISTINA – I think so.

MARCOS – You think so? You should be certain of it. When your parents died, I took you in as my daughter; you have wanted for nothing in my house. Isabel and you were the delight of my empty years when Ignacio left for his studies. It is all true. You must recognize this.

CRISTINA – I recognize it, but I do not know why you are speaking to me in this way. I have tried never to disrespect you in any way.

MARCOS – I think that is precisely the reason, because you are deliberately trying not to disrespect me whereas you did not have to work so hard. Back when you loved us and were spontaneous and happy, I had no reason to dominate you.

IGNACIO – Dad!

MARCOS – Now you watch yourself all the time, you take care as to not be disrespectful. Because now you feel like that is necessary. Isn't that right?

IGNACIO – Please, please!

MARCOS – I want to know the reason. I want to know why you secretly cry and hide from all of us.

ISABEL – Let it go, uncle. She is sick.

MARCOS – No, I can recognize the difference between sickness and hate. Now you hate me, Cristina, and that feeling conflicts with the loyalty you owe me. Is that not it? You do

not dare to look me in the eye so that I might not discover your hate in them, but a man like me can recognize it in the smallest of signs, in a furtive gesture, in any subtle accent. I have lived among hate too long for me not to recognize it in my own house.

IGNACIO – I think you should stop talking.

MARCOS – (*Insulting.*) And are you going to stop me?

IGNACIO – (*Hugging Cristina.*) I think I will at this moment. (*False exit.*) Let's go, Cristina.

MARCOS – Wait, let her speak and respond to me.

CRISTINA – (*To herself.*) Now everyone speaks of hate. (*She faces Marcos.*) And I do not know whether this is hate, uncle. I do not know what it is. But I can no longer feel like I did before, because I am no longer the same person who, along with Isabel, filled your empty years. I can no longer be anyone's delight, and least of all in this house in which injustice rules.

MARCOS – And I am the unjust one.

CRISTINA – You, us, anyone who has too much while others have lack of everything.

MARCOS – You speak as if I had established the order of life, as if I were God who decided that there should be rich and poor people.

CRISTINA – God has nothing to do with this. Those of us who are rich are rich at the expense of the poor.

MARCOS - You are only now discovering this?

CRISTINA - Yes, I just discovered this.

MARCOS - And what will you do with your oh-so-new little truth?

CRISTINA - I will wait for it to mature.

MARCOS - And once it matures, you will know that I am the tyrant, and you will allow your hate to grow as well.

CRISTINA – Once it matures, it will be an important truth. And if you are the tyrant, it will be necessary to detest you.

IGNACIO – Detest? That is a strong word, Cristina. He is the only father any of us has ever known.

MARCOS – (*To Ignacio.*) Ah! You think it is strong? What word would you use for a softer effect? How would you address me if you thought as she does?

IGNACIO – If I thought like her... are you so sure of how I think?

ISABEL – Please, let us not fight.

MARCOS – We are not fighting, Isabel. We are having a family chat after dinner.

IGNACIO – Please do not be sarcastic, dad. The things that are happening are very important to Cristina... and to me.

MARCOS – Let us listen to Cristina first.

CRISTINA – It is as if I were divided. On the one hand, I have the memory of my childhood years, when on so many occasions I fell asleep cradled in your arms. On the other hand, there is this new feeling, this rebellion against an injustice I have just awoken to. And it is not the injustice of a single day, because one forgives a mistake and even a singular act of malice if it is from a person one loves. It is an entire lifestyle, our style, cemented atop an atrocious deed.

MARCOS – Then I was right in recognizing you; you are my enemy.

CRISTINA – Let us say that I am the enemy of all of us, the enemy of the life we lead and the things we do.

Let us say that I am starting to understand, to choose, to seek the truth. If that makes me your enemy, consider that it also makes me my own enemy.

ISABEL – Is it possible that you hate me too?

CRISTINA – You accept, Isabel, you yield, and one cannot do that before injustice. I do not hate you. How could I hate you when I grew up loving you? But I cannot count you among my own people.

MARCOS – (*Intently.*) And who might your people be?

CRISTINA – (*Hurt.*) For the moment, those who still reject me.

IGNACIO – (*Bravely.*) I do not reject you, Cristina, and I think it is time for you to start counting me among your own.

CRISTINA – (*Happily.*) You too?

At the same time.

MARCOS (*Furious.*) You too?

IGNACIO – (*Simply.*) That's right.

MARCOS – You are a fool bound by love. I do not wish to keep listening to the disrespect of some kids who seem to forget what is owed in respect. (*To Cristina.*) Go to your room and stay there until I give you permission to leave. (*To Isabel.*) Go with her and tell the Nana not to let her out of her sight. (*To Ignacio.*) You, stay.

Exit Isabel and Cristina.

IGNACIO – You speak of love as if it were something unknown to you.

MARCOS – I do not know that type of love that forces a man to turn against his duties as a son.

IGNACIO – I felt that at least this time my duty as a son was to speak to you frankly, to behave as the man one must be to stand beside a woman like Cristina.

MARCOS – She is not a woman, make no mistake. She is a girl, a child who has grown without any brakes. If you are to marry her, you must be her brake and not her accomplice.

IGNACIO – A brake? And a yoke as well, I suppose. Her master, I imagine. But who could ever be Cristina's master?

MARCOS – You say this as if it brought you joy.

IGNACIO – Indeed it does, dad. An immense amount of joy: the joy of someone who unconsciously searches for a pupil and instead finds a companion. How could I not be happy to count as my wife someone who forces me to be strong and complete.

MARCOS – Against me?

IGNACIO – Before you, which is different. Ever since I was a student, I have had a great distaste for many things, and I did not dare to tell you anything. I knew what you were doing was wrong, and I kept quiet because you were the one doing it. I grew to fear Cristina's changes, to fear that you might speak to her and that she might respond because you would be forcing me to choose a position. As long as everyone kept silent, I could also be quiet without feeling guilty. I am ashamed of that now, dad. I am terribly ashamed.

MARCOS – And tomorrow you will be very proud because you finally spoke up. But keep in mind that you, the young, the unsatisfied, have done nothing other than speak and cannot scare me. I take action.

IGNACIO – One starts by taking action, remember that.

Darkness.

Scene VII

The Outlaws

Francisco and a chorus of men, tired on the road.

MEN – We do not like this. We left our women and children at the mercy of the tyrant who exploits us, sacks us, kills us.

FRANCISCO – Would it have been better to allow him to hang us in front of them? What would they win if we were all dead?

MEN – Our women know how to go with us to the fields, to care for our children, to care for our meager patrimony. But will they also know how to resolve the problem of this present hour?

FRANCISCO – They will know. They will not try to bury my brother Lorenzo's corpse because they have learned, as we have, not to run unnecessary risks. They also will not want us to return to a certain death.

MEN – What will they do, Francisco, what can our women do?

FRANCISCO – The same thing they have always done when we leave to fight for our lives and theirs, to procure a piece of bread for us all; they will wait.

MEN – Where will they find sustenance for themselves and for our children?

FRANCISCO – Where they have always found it. We do not know any of our women to have ever let a child die of hunger.

MEN – And with all of that, the children were still dying. That is why we find ourselves in this state. Weak, without sustenance, lacking energy, our children would fade in their arms and were victim to every illness.

FRANCISCO – And we saw all of that, powerless. We have seen it for generations. We are the survivors of a dark world of hunger and misery. But no more, we say, enough already. We will not continue as we have.

MEN – Would it not have been better to continue as we were, eating a bit, living with them if only a little?

FRANCISCO – Dying slowly with every passing hour. No, I do not think we would have been able to continue as we were. No one can go on like that.

MEN – But at least we were together. We were their support. They were our breath.

FRANCISCO – What sort of support were we providing? What motivation did they give us? Every morning to await the fatigues and humiliations that the day would bring; every night to throw our weary selves on a straw bed to sleep in exhaustion, or to remember bitterly a journey without bread, without dignity, without time for love, tenderness, or camaraderie. We call it love when we lie with them for some time. We call drinking together friendship, a bit of pulque or fire water. We call ourselves living only because we are not dead.

MEN – We could try something else.

FRANCISCO – Like what? Every possible road was walled off for us.

MEN – Maybe we should have spoken to Don Marcos.

FRANCISCO – Do you not realize? You cannot reason with tyrants. I tried it and he responded with the threat of an army. When it is possible to speak, you speak, when it is possible to win something, you negotiate. But when they kick you out of your own land by force, when they take away your last bread crumb, when the troops fire against you...

MEN – Then you flee? You leave your women defenseless with the elderly and the children?

FRANCISCO – You fight. We have fled to save our lives, but we will not always be fleeing. We will return with weapons, with a fleet, with courage, and with more men.

MEN – Where will we get the weapons.

FRANCISCO – Wherever there may be.

MEN – The troops have the weapons, and so do the rich estate owners and their guards.

FRANCISCO – We will take the weapons from them.

MEN – How are we to fight soldiers?

FRANCISCO – By becoming soldiers as well, although from an opposing band. We will learn to make war, just like we have learned to make so many other things without the benefit of schooling.

MEN – And our women?

FRANCISCO – At our side, like always.

MEN – How will our weak women fight?

FRANCISCO – By forgetting that they are weak. Just as they know to work the land, grind in the grindstone, or raise children with hardly a thing. They do heavy labors, our weak women.

MEN – Will we ask this of them after abandoning them?

FRANCISCO – We know them. We will not need to ask; they will give everything as they always have. More so now that we will bring them something which we had never even considered offering.

MEN – What can we possibly bring to them, as wretched as we are, if instead of giving them the peace needed for grains and children to grow, we bring them war which destroys everything? What can we possibly bring them?

FRANCISCO – (*Very sweetly.*) Hope.

Darkness.

Act II

Scene I

The Ball

Don Marcos, Isabel, choruses of serious gentlemen and proper ladies dancing the waltz 'Sobre las olas'. When the dance is finished, the choruses separate. Enter Isabel and Don Marcos. Isabel speaks to the chorus of proper ladies, and don Marcos speaks to the serious gentlemen.

GENTLEMEN – Welcome, Don Marcos. We were afraid you would be a no-show tonight.

MARCOS – Family matters held us up. I offer you all my apologies for our tardiness.

LADIES – You look stunning, Isabel, and your dress is beautiful! You will probably be the next bride. But tell us, update us, explain: why are your sister and her handsome fiancé not here?

ISABEL – Cristina is ill, and Ignacio did not wish to attend alone.

CRISTINA – Oh how sad, an illness on the eve of their wedding! But let us hope it is a mild sickness and that next time we dance it is at that wedding.

ISABEL – I hope that as well.

LADIES – (*They surround Isabel.*) Is Cristina very ill?

ISABEL – A mild ailment.

LADIES – Bad enough to miss this party?

ISABEL – When you are sick, even if it is mild, you do not wish for parties.

LADIES – But this is the best of the season. Does she not want to dance with Ignacio? And was he so saddened that he did not show up even for a moment? We are sure that she is sicker than you are telling us, Isabel, even her boyfriend stayed back to care for her. And you are not worried?

ISABEL – I have already told you that Cristina is a bit indisposed, and that Ignacio does not wish to dance with anyone else.

MARCOS – This is a splendid reception, very luxurious. These are first class wines.

GENTLEMEN – Tsk, tsk. Business is going swimmingly for all of us; it is only natural for our receptions to be magnificent. But we learned that you have a problem, Don Marcos, and we were hoping to see you to put ourselves at your disposal.

MARCOS – It was more like the threat of a problem. And either way, the matter is solved.

GENTLEMEN - (*They lean in.*) Your energy and dynamism are an example to us all. Men like you make this country.

MARCOS – (*He leans in.*) Men like all of us make this country.

LADIES – We have been afraid for your family, for ourselves. We find it astonishing that those people would dare to threaten you.

ISABEL – My uncle knows how to defend us. It is good to count on a strong and decisive man at the head of our family.

LADIES – Do you not fear retaliation from that band? Have proper defensive measures been taken?

MARCOS – What room is there for fear before that raggedy bunch? As long as the army is nearby to defend us, nothing should disturb our life.

LADIES – Our afflicted mothers do not allow us to leave the house unaccompanied. The Sisterhood of the Ladies of Charity is about to dissolve. It is terrible, terrible, for these things to happen in a civilized country.

ISABEL - Why fear? If our fathers and relatives do not seem to worry, ought we to worry? Let us enjoy the party and joy now that we are young and protected and guarded.

LADIES – You are right. No cloud looms over our heads. We are loved and our fathers and brothers look out for us. Our only concern is that of choosing the dress, the adornment, the jewel that will elevate our beauty. Let us enjoy, let us enjoy our happiness, we who are young. And let us concern ourselves with choosing our dance partner well.

GENTLEMEN – We heard that you received a shipment of excellent wine. Very selfish of you, Don Marcos, not to invite us for a tasting.

MARCOS – We will uncork a few bottles at my son’s wedding. That is a given, gentlemen.

GENTLEMEN – Yes, yes, magnificent! We expected no less from your generosity and courtesy.

MARCOS – It is what I owe you.

LADIES – Let us choose our partners for the waltz and the contradanza. Our wisdom begins in the ballrooms, and it is refined so that it may choose an appropriate life partner for us.

GENTLEMEN – Good wine, enjoyed slowly, tasted with the tip of the tongue, swirled inside our mouths so that it can then slide sweetly down our throats. It brightens many of our moments.

LADIES – Dancing is an art at which we are adept. Dance is a dance and much more than that for us. It requires all our concentration. It is no easy task; one must begin by having a good waist and nimble legs, a trained ear, and many hours of practice. Only then can one acquire the gracious weightlessness that is always praised in us.

GENTLEMEN – To ride on horseback across our territories is another great pleasure, early in the morning, when the day is just beginning. The horse gallops at a pace, obedient to the

bridle that brakes its impatience, aware of its master. And then, to stop in some spot and glance over the vast fields which are covered by a fine fog. And to tell ourselves, 'this is all ours, everything belongs to us, thank the Lord'.

LADIES – We pretend to marvel at nature, and we run to reproduce the landscape in a pretty watercolor that will hang from the living room wall. It is proof of exquisite sensibility, though deep down it is of little interest to us. What matters to us is visiting our wardrobe to look upon our dresses and say, 'all of this is mine'.

GENTLEMEN – To enter our beautiful French living rooms, furnished with pieces of marquetry and the brightest crystals, and to think, 'this is all mine'.

LADIES – To pick an inherited jewel, stored in a chest, waiting for us to want to showcase it, and to know, 'it is mine.'

GENTLEMEN – To visit the wide meadows where the fat, fine, and well-bred cattle grazes. It is all mine.

LADIES – To ride in a chic new carriage, pulled by lively horses that I know are mine.

GENTLEMEN – To sit at an exquisite table and to eat as we please from the delicacies that would appear to overwhelm the table, as many and as delicious as they are. To praise God for his gifts and to ask in prayer for our bread, which is all mine.

LADIES – A beautiful garden from which we cut enormous flower bundles to be set artistically in vases. To stroll through the sunset in an intimate colloquium with friends and to be able to tell them that all is mine.

GENTLEMEN – To collect works of art and to put them in a gallery accessed by only a few close acquaintances. To look upon the work of a master with the satisfaction of thinking, 'it is mine'.

LADIES – A fluffy bed with sheets of fine threading. It prepares dreams as sweet as our innocence. To awaken in our bedroom with the safety of one who knows, 'all this is mine'.

GENTLEMEN - To enter our serious library of volumes bound in leather, of golden fore-edges, and flexible bindings. To have all the great thinkers within the reach of our hand and to grasp them with the thought that they are all mine.

LADIES – To take a warm bath of sweet scents, assisted by our servants. To perfume our body with the aroma from bottles lined up in a vanity, the ones we care for with loving devotion, before the thought, 'they are mine'.

GENTLEMEN – To say. 'It is mine'.

LADIES – (*Scream.*) Mine. It is mine.

Darkness.

Scene II

Confession

Cristina's bedroom. Cristina and the priest.

PRIEST – Daughter, I have not seen you in church lately. (*Gives his hand to be kissed. Cristina does so reluctantly.*)

CRISTINA – I do not leave this room, father.

PRIEST – (*Fussing.*) They have told me that you were sick, but I did not imagine it was so serious.

CRISITNA – I am not, father, you have been told wrong.

PRIEST – Invite these old bones to have a seat.

CRISITNA – Apologies, father. (*The priest sits.*)

PRIEST - I do not think don Marcos capable of lying to me. He begged me to come see you.

CRISTINA - My uncle did not lie to you. He is simply mistaken. He takes as sickness what is nothing other than honest rebellion. Did he not tell you, father? Did he not say how poorly I behave and how disgraceful I am?

PRIEST - (*Visibly upset*) He told me that you are a nervous wreck.

CRISTINA - He is right.

PRIEST - That you do not eat.

CRISTINA - Hardly.

PRIEST - That you do not sleep.

CRISTINA - Only a bit and poorly.

PRIEST - Then you must accept that you are sick.

CRISTINA - I also have crying spells, I hardly laugh, and I suffer from fainting. But I am not sick.

PRIEST - (*Jovial.*) What would you say is happening to you?

CRISTINA - You could say I am miserable.

PRIEST - Certainly, sometimes young women are miserable for reasons that escape us. But you, who has everything, how can you feel this way?

CRISTINA - I think it is precisely because I have everything.

PRIEST - (*Violent.*) That is the response of a spoiled girl.

CRISTINA - That is what I was until just a few days ago.

PRIEST - (*Carefully trying to contain himself.*) There could be other reasons that you refuse to acknowledge.

CRISTINA - I know my reasons for misery.

PRIEST - Do you love Ignacio?

CRISTINA - Strongly, hopelessly. More than ever, and I already believed that I loved him.

PRIEST - You know how much he loves you.

CRISTINA - Father, Ignacio has nothing to do with my affliction. Quite the contrary.

PRIEST - Let me finish. Sometimes, due to the moral education we give to young maidens, when marriage approaches, the fear of fulfilling certain obligations...

CRISTINA - (*She laughs.*) Father, how little you know about young women, despite the fact that you are their spiritual advisor! You think the fear of losing my maidenhood has driven me mad? Oh, father! If you knew just how I love Ignacio, you would accuse me of sin.

PRIEST - Settle down, Cristina, and allow me to say what I came to tell you. God knew what he was doing by granting men and women the power of conception, and the church looks fondly upon the love of a marriage sanctified by the church. Do not fear if there are certain urges within you that modesty may not be able to accept.

CRISTINA - Modesty? Father, there is no shame in love apart from that of not loving enough. If the advent of my wedding were disturbing me, I would be a very poor wife for a man like Ignacio.

PRIEST - I must know what is wrong with you. Do you not wish to tell me?

CRISTINA - In confession?

PRIEST - Or in conversation. In either case, I promise you the same secrecy.

CRISTINA - But you already spoke to my uncle. You already know what is wrong with me.

PRIEST - I wish to hear it from you. Is there nothing for which you wish to accuse yourself?

CRISTINA - There is so much for which I must accuse myself! Yes, I accuse myself: I have been indifferent and selfish before the suffering of my fellow humans. I have lived with

frivolity, focused on trivial matters, while all around me misery was killing children, drying breasts, destroying lives. And I still believed I was a good person!

PRIEST – You have done charity.

CRISTINA – No, father, I have not even done that. I have given handouts.

PRIEST – What else could you have done? Handouts, when given as you have, become charity, and this is a cardinal virtue.

CRISTINA – As I was doing? Going once in a while, in a strict rotation, to the dwellings of the poor to return riches. At some point allowing a child to stain a dress of mine with dirty hands knowing that servants will have to wash it later. I never took a piece of bread away from my mouth for the sake of others, and even if I had done so even once, the next day I would have had as many biscuits as I pleased. No, father, do not absolve me of this sin.

PRIEST – God does not demand from his people...

CRISTINA – God? Oh father, if only God existed!

PRIEST – What are you saying, you blaspheme?

CRISTINA – If there were a god, father, he would not be as complacent as you are. He would be a demanding god, so harsh with people like me that we would all be afflicted with the same pain I suffer.

PRIEST – Do you think yourself great enough to suffer God's pain?

CRISTINA – I feel small enough to feel his absence. I no longer believe, father. I can no longer lean on him, and for this reason I feel so alone and wretched. I would want to fill the void with my love for people, but I know not how to love them, given that I cannot fight on their behalf.

PRIEST – You are delirious. You do not know enough, and so you get confused.

CRISTINA – You know plenty. You have been anointed as his representative, and you have refused to intervene before injustice. You do not get confused, father, but you also do not do as you should.

PRIEST – Cristina, were you not sick...

CRISTINA – I am not. You said you wished to speak with me, and I am speaking freely. You must choose whether or not you can stand my lack of hypocrisy.

PRIEST – (*Conciliatory.*) You are casting me out, daughter.

CRISTINA – No, I am not casting you out. I would like to keep talking to you, if you accept my new tone, which is as much an affront to you as it is to everyone.

PRIEST – Let us talk then. Perhaps by reasoning you may better understand what is happening. You accuse me. You say that I do not fulfill my duty. And I ask you, what do you think this duty consists of?

CRISTINA – (*Simply.*) Of standing beside the meek and the humble.

PRIEST – Only beside the meek?

CRISTINA – Primarily. If They are the ones suffering most.

PRIEST – The church is catholic, that is to say universal. It loves the humble and the powerful equally, it loves all of the people it embraces in its bosom. It is above parties and ideologies, above social classes, and any group's interest. Therein lies its strength. Therein lies the luminous truth that has supported it for twenty centuries.

CRISTINA – And when you tell the oppressed to resign themselves, that the kingdom of heaven will be theirs, are you not serving the interests of one class above others? You know very well that had you intervened before my uncle, or before the governor, it would have likely been allowed that Lorenzo to be buried.

PRIEST – In this country there was a long fight to separate us from the state. We abide by this so that we can continue serving our cause. We have renounced temporary power. It is not left to us to get involved with government acts.

CRISTINA - Whether or not they burry Lorenzo is now a secondary matter. The important thing is not to passively watch from the side with our arms crossed at all of the injustice afflicting people.

PRIEST – I have already explained my position.

CRISTINA – Christ was poor.

PRIEST – And he spoke of rendering unto Caesar.

CRISTINA – And who is to say what belongs to Caesar? All wealth, all health, all happiness at the expense of the misery of millions of people. It is unfair to render so much unto Caesar.

PRIEST – You yourself have just stated that no one knows what belongs to Caesar. How then can you start denying him?

CRISTINA – By thinking that all men are Caesar. By distributing his patrimony among everyone.

PRIEST – Do you think that is the church's duty?

CRISTINA – Father, you think that by denying what is Caesar's one will end up denying what is God's. In your view, both are intimately linked. I know this because the same happened to me: by rebelling against one I stopped believing in the other.

CRISTINA – How can you speak such foolishness? Christ himself separated them in his words and in his actions.

CRISTINA – What is left for one who belongs neither to God nor Caesar?

PRIEST – (*He stands.*) I came in good faith to help you, Cristina, and I will return if you need me, but today I leave saddened. I want to believe that you suffer from a temporary lapse.

CRISTINA – Goodbye, father, and thank you.

PRIEST – For what?

CRISTINA – When I saw you, I feared that you would convince me. I thank you for not doing so.

Darkness.

Scene III **The Letter**

The Nana and Jacinto in the living room. The chorus of men in another area.

NANA – I do not want to pressure you, nor do I want you to betray a secret. But if you know where they are, look for them, and tell them that it is urgent that they return.

JACINTO – So they can kill them?

NANA – It is true. They run the risk of being killed. My God, I no longer know where I am or where to turn! If they do not return, Cristina will be lost somehow.

JACINTO – You poor woman. You care for both. Either Francisco will be lost, or little Cristina will be lost.

NANA – Take this letter and get it to my godson. In it I explain what is happening.

JACINTO – (*Distrustful.*) I do not know where he is. I cannot send it.

NANA – (*She forces him to take the letter.*) Then tear it or burn it.

Jacinto walks to where Francisco and his men are. Nana remains as if on the prowl.

JACINTO – (*Giving the letter to Francisco.*) Your godmother sends this letter.

FRANCISCO – How did she know you would find us?

MEN – Jacinto, we do not want to wait until those letters reach us. Tell us what new disgrace it announces, because ever since we have been on the run, our greatest misfortune is not knowing what happens in our land, not knowing the state of our families, of our homes.

JACINTO – The letter does not say anything that should worry you. In the pueblo, everything is as you left it. Lorenzo rots under the sun, and your families keep watch and wait.

FRANCISCO – Why did you run the risk of bringing me this letter from my godmother?

JACINTO – Because very strange things are happening in the estate's house. Little Cristina has confronted Don Marcos, and young Ignacio also appears to be on our side.

FRANCISCO - Whatever happens with Cristina or Ignacio is of no concern to us. It was not worth it for you to run this risk... or for you to put us in danger.

JACINTO – Whatever risk I may run is my own. Nothing will happen to you because I lied even to Nana about not knowing your whereabouts.

FRANCISCO – You are mistaken, Jacinto. Your risk-taking affects us because you are our only possible link to our people in the pueblo. If we are about to fight, we need to be more disciplined.

JACINTO – Precisely because we are about to fight. Cristina and Ignacio can be our allies in the enemy's house.

MEN – You are too naïve, Jacinto! No one in our enemy's house can be our ally, precisely because they are in our enemy's house. Read the letter, Francisco, and inform us of your godmother's words, who is also not our ally, but who we hope is not our enemy.

NANA – (*While Francisco reads the letter.*) Francisco, it is necessary for you to come back and solve the problem you created with your thoughtless action.

FRANCISCO – I am on my way, godmother, to solve the problem in the only possible manner, with weapons in hand. In many places my men and I have found ourselves with desperate people, like us, who have risen up. We wish to join with them under the common banner of justice.

NANA – Everything has changed in the house. Little Cristina has confronted Don Marcos because of you, and Mr. Ignacio appears to have broken away from his father completely.

MEN – She blames us? She says this is our fault? We know little about them, just as they ignore everything about us. We do not care about their problems, and they have never been bothered by our own.

NANA – Cristina only speaks of the injustices committed against you.

FRANCISCO – (*He stops pretending to read. Answers Nana directly.*) Against you? Now you speak like the owners? You mean 'against us' because you are ours, even if you were brought up in the estate.

NANA – (*Answering him directly.*) Yes, but time uproots and displaces, Francisco. Isabel and Cristina are the daughters I did not have, they are more my daughters than you are my son, Francisco, even though you are my godson by baptism. It is easier to love the child you raise than the one you see grow far away from you.

MEN – Mother to the children of others, will you be willing to drive your displacement to the point that you sacrifice us for the sake of that girl you love so much? On the one hand

there is the very real danger we are all facing; we may lose our lives. On the other, for that girl, danger consists simply of challenging her uncle's anger.

NANA – I am not afraid of Don Marcos' anger.

MEN – In that case, trust us with your fears. We will listen to you with patience, even if that is all we can do for you.

NANA – If only I knew what I fear! It is as if I had a confusing premonition that tasted of blood and death.

FRANCISCO – Which could very well be ours.

NANA – I am aware that there has been blood and death, and I also mourn that with you. Lorenzo's corpse is still there, rotting in the sun. Will you do nothing, Francisco? That miserable lump was your brother. Will he not receive a Christian burial?

FRANCISCO – Lorenzo was my brother, by blood and affection. But godmother, do you think I too should lose my life to accomplish something that will not help him in any way?

NANA – It would help others. The women hold a watch so the children will not get near. The entire pueblo is mourning. It has always been hazy and dusty, but now we live locked inside a cloud. The wire fencing does not hide the horrors of that field.

MEN – You are looking to deceive us to force our return. With your timid intention you set the bait to lead us to certain death.

NANA – I do not wish for your death, but neither can I stand what is happening to Cristina. It is impossible to live eternally suffocated between two loyalties. I have made my choice.

FRANCISCO – Stop tormenting her. Her loyalty would be exemplary if it were not so inhumane. Rather than a mother, her years of servitude have turned her into a follower of her masters.

NANA – Those who love, follow.

FRANCISCO – They deprived you of your family to give you a chain, a bed of straw, a small corner in the kitchen, and later a corner in the girls' room. Because of them you never knew a man, nor the warmth of a home, nor your own children. How can you claim to love them?

NANA – By saying I love them. This complicated matter is as simple as that for me.

MEN – How alien, how far away you feel! Servitude was an unbearable yoke for us. For you it is a loving bond that binds you.

NANA – You speak of chains. It is true, I have my own chain. It is the chain that binds any mother to her children. I am no different to the women who stay in the pueblo nursing their children, protecting their sleep.

FRANCISCO – We are not blaming you. You love Cristina, and you defend her, just as we do our families. It is simply that our love makes us confront each other.

NANA – Cristina is in danger. She slips away. Not for the sake of her loved ones, family, or fiancé, but for your sake. Reject me, insult me, as much as you like, but come save her.

MEN – We are on our way. We are getting nearer, but we want to arrive as soldiers of the revolutionary army, not as a confused band.

FRANCISCO – We will return, godmother, as a strong and disciplined army. Time is almost up for Don Marcos and the estate owners.

NANA – But come quickly, before something happens to Cristina.

MEN – We will go, but not for Cristina's sake. We will go for our own sake, for our rights, for our justice, for our people that stayed in the pueblo.

NANA – Come for whatever reason and as whatever you wish, but come, come quickly.

Darkness.

Scene IV
The Trap

Cristina's room. Isabel and Nana, then Cristina.

NANA – It is good that your uncle allows her to take little walks alone in the garden.

ISABEL – (*With a tone of superiority.*) My uncle is no jailer.

NANA – Nor is your sister a criminal.

ISABEL – No, but she is distancing herself from us and getting lost.

NANA – Whatever it is, we need to help her now.

ISABEL – You love her more than you love me, don't you, Nana?

NANA – She is suffering. When you were girls and one of you was sick, that is who I loved most at that moment, just until she got better, and then I would love you both equally. It pains me so to see you two divided.

ISABEL – It is not my fault. I have not changed.

NANA – Yes you have. Now you judge Cristina harshly, whereas in the past you used to follow her in all her mischief. So much so that in more than one occasion you ended up taking the fall for her.

ISABEL – It is not possible to live forever as if we were children. I do not intend to pay for her present attitude. This is more than some childhood mischief, this is madness.

NANA – She has a madness of the heart more so than of the head. She suffers for the misfortunes of others.

ISABEL – What about our misfortunes? We used to be a happy family, very close-knit; now we are all miserable because of her. It is not a good madness that which causes such misfortune, that which looks out for what is alien instead of what is one's own.

NANA – Perhaps she has the madness of heroes.

ISABEL – So now my sister is a heroine? Do not exaggerate, Nana. Cristina is nothing more than a poor and confused girl, who instead of planning her wedding and delighting in her love is out getting lost in dangerous and alien paths.

NANA – Let us return her to reason then.

ISABEL – We have tried everything.

NANA – Except for suppressing the cause of her madness.

ISABEL – You speak nonsense. Who knows what that cause may be?

NANA – Cristina suffers because Lorenzo's corpse has not been buried.

ISABEL – And what can we do? Ignacio already tried speaking to my uncle, but he only managed to anger him.

NANA – We could make Cristina believe that he will be buried soon.

ISABEL – We will not accomplish anything. This is already like an obsession. As soon as she learned the truth, she would go back to the same thing.

NANA – By then she would be married and on her honeymoon trip.

ISABEL – But she would discover the truth as soon as she spoke to Uncle Marcos.

NANA – Then...we can think of something else.

Cristina and Jacinto enter, but they do not approach Isabel or the Nana.

JACINTO – (*Scared.*) Do not say anything, please, little Cristina. I should not have told you.

CRISTINA – You did well, Jacinto, you have calmed me greatly. Even if they all reject me, I am glad that they are starting to defend themselves.

JACINTO – And what about your family? And you and young Ignacio?

CRISTINA – We will all be held accountable; perhaps Ignacio and I will be able to live with simplicity and happiness.

JACINTO – Seeing you so desperate, I wanted to help you a little. But please, do not tell on me, not even to the Nana. I put myself in your hands, little Cristina, and without thinking I said what I was not supposed to say. It is not just for me. It is for all of us from this pueblo and from others. But, it's just that you have always been so good!

CRISTINA – Do not fear, Jacinto. If you only knew how grateful I am to you! But tell me, are they nearby already? Are they armed? Are they enough to stand against the army?

JACINTO – (*Scared.*) Do not ask me anything else. I have already said too much. (*Exits. Cristina walks towards Isabel and the Nana.*)

NANA – (*To Isabel.*) Leave it to me.

ISABEL – Nana...

CRISTINA – Are you here to visit me, or has my uncle given some order against me?

ISABEL – You speak of Uncle Marcos as if he were persecuting you.

CRISTINA – He is not, it is true. He is just getting rid of me by keeping me locked up.

ISABEL – He treats you as befitting what you are, a sick woman. He cares for you in your chambers, he allows you walks in the open air, he cares that you have medical attention. What else do you want?

CRISTINA – Precisely not to be treated as a sick person. I would prefer he confine me as a rebel.

NANA – Do not fight, least of all now. (*To Cristina.*) We bring you good news, and that is why we were waiting for you.

CRISTINA - Is it still possible that there is good news for me? Is it that I am free to go where I wish and do what I please? Can I reunite with my people?

ISABEL - (*Shaken.*) You are delirious! You are with your people, unless you are no longer my sister nor our parents' daughter.

NANA – You will soon be free, Cristina, and we will celebrate your wedding.

CRISTINA – (*Hopeful.*) Did Uncle Marcos tell you this?

NANA – No, your uncle does not know yet.

CRISTINA – (*Disheartened.*) Then I do not see how.

NANA – Your misfortune stems from Lorenzo's death and his unburied body.

ISABEL – Is that really the reason for your rebelliousness?

NANA – Well you should know that Lorenzo will soon receive a Christian burial.

CRISTINA – If my uncle is not aware of this, how can you be so sure?

NANA – Francisco is my godson, and he has informed me that he is on his way to turn himself in.

CRISTINA – No, Nana, that is not true.

NANA – And once Francisco is apprehended, his brother will be buried just as Don Marcos promised.

CRISTINA – Nana, please get the message to him that he should not come, that they will kill him if he returns. Burying Lorenzo is not so important.

NANA – I do not know where to find him. The message was left at my door by unknown hands. I can get no message to him.

CRISTINA – Well scream it, write it in the wind, look for his wife and let her know. He must not return.

NANA – And tell him what? He is well aware of the dangers he faces with his approach. Death should not be one of them if he has made up his mind. Francisco is no fool.

CRISTINA – Nor is he a martyr for futile causes. I do not understand, I had the impression that he was a strong fighter, sure of himself and decisive. I cannot believe that he would risk his life in an absurd gesture.

NANA – Fraternal feelings can be very strong in some men.

ISABEL – (*Restless.*) And in some women as well. I would do the same for you, Cristina.

CRISTINA – (*Emotional.*) Even if you were to risk the plight of others?

ISABEL – What is this talk of plights and struggles? I know nothing about those things, and I do not think I ever will. I just know of the love I have for my family.

CRISTINA – Even for a wounded family like ours?

ISABEL – Perhaps it is precisely because it is a wounded family. Perhaps because I have just realized that I play a role in it and that all of you need me.

CRISTINA – I need you because I am so alone. Will you help me prevent more deaths and injustice?

ISABEL - I cannot help you with that because I do not understand you, and we would not be able to accomplish anything. Do not ask me to intervene. I can only ease your sorrow with my sisterly love.

CRISTINA - (*Screams*) But you have to help me! Someone has to help me, because I feel that I cannot go on anymore.

Darkness.

Scene V

Fear

Cristina in her bedroom. In a choral area aside, Isabel and the chorus of proper ladies.

LADIES – Isabel, we are worried about you and your family. What is with this news we are hearing about rifts within your household?

ISABEL – Baseless rumors. Since when do you listen to such chatter, friends?

LADIES – We know that Cristina is sick...

ISABEL – She is recuperating.

LADIES - ...and that she is not allowed to leave her room.

ISABEL – She is resting in her chambers.

CRISTINA – They treat me like a wretch, poor and demented. It is possible that I have lost my mind because the reasonable thing is to lead a stable and well-ordered life. (*She sees herself in a hand mirror.*) They are right, I have changed. Is it that I really am crazy? Is what I have imposed on myself too much for a young woman abandoned by everyone? (*She lets go of the mirror with a sigh.*) I will never carry out my plans. I will not be able to bury Lorenzo's corpse. (*She resettles herself. This sort of transition will play out throughout the entirety of this monologue. While Isabel and the ladies talk, Cristina can play with her wedding veil, put away her gifts, etc., also while she monologues.*) But I cannot allow them kill Francisco.

LADIES – They also tell us that Ignacio and his father hardly speak a word to each other.

ISABEL – Too many heartless and malicious lies are told behind our backs! I do not understand how you echo among yourselves something that can hurt a fellow family.

LADIES – Now you get angry and imagine that we are prompted by dark thoughts. Are we, perhaps, not your friends? Have we not grown beside one another, sharing the naïve secrets of our short age? Understand that it is difficult for us to see you close yourself off now, like a hermit, due to something that may be no worse than another innocuous matter.

ISABEL – We have been friends for a long time...

LADIES – Since childhood. Since before, given that our mothers were also friends.

ISABEL - ...but Cristina is my sister. I cannot allow her woes to lie on the mouths of others.

LADIES – Now you offend us unnecessarily. Our mouths are not like others'. They are ours, your friends. Mouths that were born sealed to not reveal secrets.

ISABEL – Forgive me. I did not mean to be rude. I find myself shaken, and I cannot find the tone of our previous tenderness.

LADIES – Those dark circles that insult your eyes, and that tiny crease that begins to tense your lips had already told us that you were shaken. But Isabel, sweet sister, is there nothing we can do to help?

ISABEL – I need all the help that your well-intentioned advice may be able to offer. I am a weak young woman. I always have been. Cristina was the strong one, and now I ask for your help so that I can help Cristina in turn.

LADIES – Is what they say true then? We can hardly believe that good-mannered Cristina, so docile and loving, such a model of conduct, could have changed overnight.

ISABEL - The events at the hacienda have affected her in a strange way. Her behavior is such that I have seen myself forced to reject her.

LADIES - Well done. Principles rank above familial love, no matter how strong this love may be. The Bible says it, does it not? At least that is what the priest says.

CRISTINA – I must consider my family, all of those who love me. Have I not listened to Isabel? Although her words should not account for much. I cannot have as a friend someone who only loves me in word. And what if I were to lose my young life, which is only now heading towards being a true life? It does not matter. It should not matter. Lives more precious than mine could be lost. Ah, I am afraid, I am so very afraid! And I fear because I do not throw myself towards danger with my eyes closed; I mourn on my own behalf before anything has even happened to me. I am afraid of descending to a tomb before completing the span of my days on earth.

ISABEL – The bonds that join us are of such strength that they cannot see themselves broken by her present behavior. I have always loved Cristina, but I think I love her more now because she is no longer the strong one, the decisive one, the older sister that always overshadowed me. I love Cristina more than ever because she is sick, and I can help her.

LADIES – Those are honorable feelings but be careful. Love, even if it is only sororal love, often becomes the lure that drives us into a cruel trap.

ISABEL – The sweet trap of a man's love, I do not know it yet. My feelings are limited to my family and are therefore good and acceptable.

CRISTINA – I can leave Ignacio a widower before our wedding is carried out. (*Transition.*) Our love may not last, but at this moment it is stronger than that of many couples that live out their days under the protection of conformity. (*Transition.*) I will not taste the marriage bed. I will not hear the sweet tones of wedding hymns. I will not know a husband's caresses. I will not delight in the sweetness of raising a child. A child who would grow before the joyful eyes of his mother. I am alone; I no longer have friends. But what am I saying? I have many friends, even if I do not know them all. I am friend of all those who preceded me in sacrifice, of those who glimpse upon a better world, and even those who, without hope, have suffered the mark of every injustice upon their lives. I cannot falter. I am not alone.

LADIES – You very well know that Cristina is in the wrong.

ISABEL – That is exactly why I suffer so much for her.

LADIES – She defies every principle imparted upon us by a careful education. She rebels against your uncle's authority. She defies religion and displays disorder in many other ways.

ISABEL – I know. Something dangerous and disordered looms over her, like a darkness, like a force about to explode and knock her down.

LADIES – Something very bad is about to happen, as it does every time someone attempts to break the order of things. Have we not been taught to obey and be silent, to follow an open path paved by all of our predecessors, our mothers and sisters? Why get lost in the weeds? Why search for an independent path, leaving behind the old one, the long, safe, and well-defined one that our lives must follow.

CRISTINA – I may be headed towards death, but I feel more for the men with every passing moment. I do not search for death, nor do I wish for it. I still have many things that await me in life. But I must fulfill a duty that, for the first time, is born from within me and is not imposed from the outside.

ISABEL – Before long, this sadness that invades me, that nevertheless has the sweetness of quiet things, will burst in a thousand desperate pieces.

LADIES – Before we expect it, some catastrophe will occur which will fill your sister and your household with grief. We also have a terrible feeling.

ISABEL – What can I do?

LADIES – Do not fret over her. Think of your future instead.

ISABEL – How can I help my sister?

LADIES – She is no longer your sister.

ISABEL – I will look for a way to share Cristina's fate.

LADIES – No, stay away, stay far away, unless you, unless you also wish to be enveloped by that dark twister.

Darkness.

Scene VI **The Sacrifice**

A room in the estate. Don Marcos and Ignacio.

IGNACIO – Father, I wish to speak to you.

MARCOS – Are you willing to change your attitude?

IGNACIO – You are right to speak to me like that. I have shown myself to be weak and indecisive, first in one way, then in another. But now I believe I have made a decision and will be firm.

MARCOS – Firm? In what sense?

IGNACIO – At the very least, I can say that I am firm in the same sense as our last conversation.

MARCOS – You will not yield?

IGNACIO – No, nor do I expect you to yield. It is useless for us to return always to the same matters, like those train tracks that can run parallel for many kilometers without ever meeting. Our tracks do not have a common point of departure.

MARCOS – Then I am glad you have come to me because I want to tell you what I have decided.

IGNACIO – We will exchange decisions, dad. I came to inform you of mine.

MARCOS – Let me speak first, because you may change your mind when you hear what I have to say. I am disowning you, Ignacio, if you persist with this attitude.

IGNACIO – I think I was wrong a moment ago. Our tracks converge here. I came to tell you that I am leaving forever.

MARCOS – And how do you expect to survive?

IGNACIO – You are depriving me of an inheritance I can renounce gladly, but you have given me things you cannot take away. When you conceived me, you gave me hands to work, and intelligence. When you raised me, you gave me an education, for which I thank you.

MARCOS – You speak with arrogance. A long list of people, unknown to me and to you, worked to accumulate everything we own. Do you not believe yourself indebted to them? Do you owe them no responsibility for whatever may happen to this patrimony?

IGNACIO – I cannot be responsible for what our ancestors did with no other guide than their raptor-like instinct. I cannot be blamed for being the final male in a doubtful lineage founded on injustice and displacement.

MARCOS – You have no right to speak to me like this.

IGNACIO – I was not aware that any sort of right prevailed here. I am simply participating in our long-held tradition.

MARCOS – For us to end up here!

IGNACIO – Yes, father, we have finally come to this.

MARCOS – If you were leaving, you should have saved me this final confrontation.

IGNACIO – I could not leave secretly from a house that was my home for so long.

Furthermore, I am not leaving alone. I will take Cristina, whom you are keeping locked up.

MARCOS – And she will remain that way. Do you think I do not know that she is the cause for everything that has happened between us?

IGNACIO – Even if we cannot come to an understanding in any other matter, you must know that I am not defying you to follow Cristina. At the very least credit me with the ability to think for myself.

MARCOS – Belatedly.

IGNACIO – I am young. It is not too late for me.

MARCOS – You trust that new doors will open for you. Well, I am closing one right now; Cristina will not leave.

IGNACIO – She is my fiancée.

MARCOS – She is under my guardianship. Only I have the power to make decisions concerning her.

IGNACIO – Will you never stop speaking of others as if they were your property? If I decide to take Cristina, it is because we have both agreed upon this.

MARCOS – Have you spoken to her against my wishes?

IGNACIO – I respected your wishes only because I found no way to defy them. I have not spoken to Cristina, but I do not need to do so to understand her way of thinking.

MARCOS – You are such a fool, such a fool! Who cares about what a young inexperienced girl thinks, one without a patrimony, with no means other than those offered to her by a strong arm that will shield her?

IGNACIO – My arm is quite strong if that is what we are getting at. I do not wish to discuss my fiancée with you, nor will I ask that you sanction with your presence that wedding which displeases you so.

MARCOS – What I am trying to say is that there will be no wedding.

IGNACIO – You cannot do that. We are not cattle to be bred whenever you wish and then separated at your convenience. You cannot decide something so monstrous relying only on your money to coerce us, and I have already told you that we renounce it. You have lost your power over us.

Enter Isabel.

ISABEL – I see that you are finally speaking to each other, and I am gladdened. Can I bring Cristina so we can all be reunited once again, like before, to plan the ceremony?

MARCOS – If you are referring to the wedding ceremony, we were just saying that it will not happen.

ISABEL – How? Have you called off your engagement?

IGNACIO – Is either one of us dead?

ISABEL – Of course not.

IGNACIO – Then how can you possibly believe that our engagement is off.

MARCOS – If one leaves and the other stays, those are not great prospects for a successful marriage.

IGNACIO – Now you mock us! Cristina and I will not be separated, and even if that were to happen, our love would not disappear.

ISABEL – I do not really understand what is happening.

IGNACIO – My father is the one saying there will be no marriage.

ISABEL – *(To Marcos.)* How can you possibly think of separating them? Please, uncle, do not deprive Cristina of her only hope.

MARCOS – I no longer take her into consideration.

IGNACIO – And your own son? He will not find a love like the one that binds him to Cristina.

MARCOS – Do you speak of my son or on behalf of your sister?

ISABEL – I mean both of them, since they are both my brothers. Why cause misfortunes that can be avoided? Allow them to leave, and I will stay by your side to try and substitute them both. Uncle do not impede this wedding.

MARCOS – It is already too much. You and your wedding inconvenience me.

Enter Nana.

NANA – Sir, something terrible is happening! Cristina managed to get her hands on the key and secretly left towards the fenced-off field, but that girl knows nothing of deception. I noticed in time and tried to follow her, but my old legs refused to keep up with her.

IGNACIO – I will go look for her. *(He goes off running. His shouts are heard as he leaves and the whole time thereafter.)*

ISABEL – Uncle, should anything happen to my sister I will hold you responsible for as long as the two of us live.

MARCOS – You are as crazy as she is.

A distant shot. Ignacio's shouts become desperate.

ISABEL – What was that? *(She runs off.)*

Another shot. Silence.

MARCOS – Ignacio! (*With a flat voice.*) Not my son, Lord. Not my son.

Enter Jacinto.

JACINTO – Boss, there has been a terrible accident.

NANA – (*As if confirming something already known.*) Cristina is dead?

JACINTO – Yes.

MARCOS – And Mr. Ignacio?

JACINTO – Him as well, sir. The soldiers fired upon them. First upon Cristina, who attempted to enter the closed-off field, under cover of darkness. They likely saw nothing but a darkened figure. Then Mr. Ignacio, who was running like a madman, without noticing the danger. They lie there, sir, dead. One near the other, almost together.

Isabel appears. From the door.

ISABEL – The soldiers carried out their orders, Uncle Marcos.

Darkness.

Epilogue

Two choral areas. In one, the chorus of women from the pueblo. In the other, the chorus of men joined by Francisco.

WOMEN – Don Marcos has departed, and the army refused to guard the field any longer. Let us take advantage of this moment to bury Lorenzo. But you should be careful because the troops are waiting for you from their garrison.

MEN – Our fight is only beginning, and the victims are not the ones we expected. Power turns against its own and casts them down. Fathers kill their children and leave us corpses we cannot claim as our own.

WOMEN – And nevertheless they are our dead, the first of them. We should not be faithless to their memory.

MEN – How can we possibly relate our fight to Cristina's uncertain struggle?

WOMEN – She lived her final days in confinement and solitude, away from the love of her people and spurned by our rejection. But in that field her figure resembled that of Lorenzo, and there was no longer any difference between them. They were simply corpses bereft of life. The hand that stripped life from one of them deprived the other one of life as well.

MEN – We did not ask for her sacrifice.

WOMEN – Sacrifice is not something to be solicited. It is given through conviction and loyalty to others. Cristina had these things. The same pain that made us cry for Lorenzo makes us shed tears for her.

MEN - Everything she did was useless. No personal and isolated act will drive us to victory. No one can assume what is in our best interest in our stead, when we are the most interested.

WOMEN: A difficult lesson, the one Cristina paid with her own life. Blood spilled for the sake of a just cause cannot be useless in the long run. For this reason, we will go with Isabel and the Nana to bury Ignacio and Cristina, to whom today we cannot deny the title of brothers.

Antigone: The voices that set ablaze the desert

Original play by Perla de la Rosa

Translation by Andrés A. Carrete

Prologue

A lonely road in the desertic Ciudad Tebas. Midnight. Sporadic lights from cars. Nighttime sounds in the big city. A woman appears, walking. Filled with anxiety she waits for the bus on which she will return home. She comes from working the factory's second shift.

WOMAN 1 – I am a woman in this city, where everything is made of sand. For years we have been struggling with the War. To be a woman here is to be in danger. Because of this we have decided to build shelters below the sand. To cover ourselves in sand. To shelter ourselves below the sand in order to continue living. It is a matter of hiding ourselves, of disappearing from the enemy's gaze. Not all of us have made this choice. Some think they are safe... they pretend that nothing is happening... or like Clara, they arm themselves with courage and go out to the factories... Someone has to work.

Scene I. One of too many stories.

A woman finds herself alone in her house. She speaks by herself before a door.

ISABEL: When we came home, something caught your attention.

The woman opens the door and exits, she immediately reappears, now accompanied by her sister. They are both out of breath. They have just run home from one of the shelters, in the middle of the night, to search for water and food, maybe some clothes.

The characters now find themselves at the story's point of departure. Isabel reconstructs the events of the previous night with her sister.

ELENA (*entering*): Who opened our door?

The two sisters fearfully stand before the threshold.

ISABEL: What is with that bag?

ELENA: Food!

ISABEL: Be careful.

ELENA: Who was here?

ISABEL: Someone who guessed our hunger.

ELENA: It is our sister who has returned!

Elena takes out the food and prepares to eat.

ISABEL (*Speaking to her from the present-future, in which Elena can no longer hear her, as if speaking to a ghost*): We embraced each other full of joy. It had been nearly a week with no news from Clara. We said goodbye to her Tuesday morning, and Sunday afternoon we decided to enter the shelter, thinking that she had disappeared, that we had lost her, and

that they would not stop until they had come for us as well. But Clara was very lucky, and surely, she was just fulfilling work obligations.

She comes back to the present time to reconstruct the day's events. They begin to eat.

ELENA: Get some more. Poor Clara. Work in the factory is very harsh.

ISABEL: The hardest part is having to go out. Perhaps it would be best for us to stay in the shelter indefinitely...the three of us. We could work like the others and exchange our work for food with the carriers.

ELENA: Where could she have been all this time?

ISABEL: Where else? Working.

ELENA: No, I mean when it was no longer time for work. When she would have otherwise been here.

ISABEL: Maybe she decided to enter some shelter.

ELENA: And where might she be now?... (*Silence. A terrible howl is heard. Silence.*) Let's go see.

ISABEL: Stay seated! Those who wish to see are seen themselves (*silence.*) We did not try to see what had happened. We also did not continue eating. In silence, without looking at each other, we settled on sleeping. As I hung my clothes, I felt my heart being paralyzed, my sister Clara's work coat was hanging with the rest of the clothes (*to Elena*) Clara is not at the factory.

ELENA: Of course! She quit and they gave her severance, that is how she was able to buy food. Surely, she has also decided to stay in a shelter like us. Or maybe it is time to return to our town (*A second horrified scream is heard*). Who screams before our door?

ISABEL: Someone who is being tortured.

ELENA: We should go see.

ISABEL: Stay here! (*pauses*). And we did not go see what had happened. We spent the night without sleeping. As we waited for Clara, morning came...

(*Chores and cleaning, she takes a bucket and goes for water. She opens the door and enters, horrified*).

Elena! Elena, don't go outside! Our sister is out there. Oh, how we deceived ourselves! She is there, her body massacred before our door!

ELENA (*She goes outside. Screams in terror. Enters, very shaken*): They killed her, they killed her! She was the one screaming for help. A knife, give me a knife to cut the rope with which they tied her. I am going to free her, I am going to bring her inside to warm her, to return life to her.

ISABEL: Give me that knife. Your efforts will be in vain. Our sister cannot revive. If they see us near her, we risk having the same fate.

ELENA: Let me. When they killed her, I did not take a single step.

Some knocks are heard at the door, Isabel opens the door slightly, a hand pushes the door, and a strange, menacing man appears.

MAN: And who are you? This woman appeared murdered before your door. Do you recognize her?... What is she to you? The damn idiot disobeyed the security rules. Imagine that, going out to the streets alone, without a man.

ISABEL: No, we do not know her.

MAN: And that one? What is she doing with that knife?

Elena runs, the man follows after her. Isabel immediately closed the door. She has been left paralyzed. Just as she did not bring aid to the screams of the supposed stranger from the previous night, she also did not dare to go out and help Elena. Panic was her entire response. Now, behind the door and before the audience, she concludes her reconstruction of the transpired events.

ISABEL: I saw my sister Elena. To free our sister and to return life to her, would she go looking for death? Clara had only one wish: to live.

Scene II. The return of Antigone

Antigone appears carrying a luggage bag. It is her return to Ciudad Tebas.

ANTIGONE: Ah desolate city, the city of the moaning winds, of the merciless sun, of the dried-up rivers... the city who lost her voice. How many miseries are part of your legacy? Cry, cry endlessly because there is no justice for your dead, no funerary honors to embalm their memory.

Scene III. Creon's conference. The decree.

Enter Creon, he crouches down and kisses the ground.

CREON: Let everyone know that God has wanted me to live in order to govern this city, sunken by its mistakes. The hate that intended to annihilate me did not subdue me, on the contrary, it succumbs before my totality. Citizens, they have wanted my mandate to disappear, and they slander us to fill us with shame.

They speak of deaths, hundreds of deaths; of the corpses of innocent women, lying with nothing more than the desert as their tombs. Lies! What deaths are they talking about? Citizens, those dark voices intend to demolish the great city we have built. They unsuccessfully intend to hinder our path to victory, without accounting for the sweat from every day of battle, fought so that there will always be a sunrise over this, the great city, raised by an army of men that work nonstop.

Therefore, we cannot tolerate that the wounding voices of miserable, country-less women find an echo among well-intentioned people. We cannot allow them to turn us into hostages of lies and blackmail on account of their petty interests. From this highest position of responsibility conferred upon me by you, citizens, when you elected me your governor, I declare that there are no dead women. That there are no bodies to identify. And this is very clear. They do not exist. And whoever dares contradict me is obliged to present evidence. Those tasked with seeing to our safety have been accused, brashly, of covering things up, and they have dared to single them out as perpetrators of grave crimes. Nothing can be more irresponsible.

Those alien voices, filled with ungratefulness to our city, only seek to deprive us of progress and good fortune. The women reported as missing are alive. And they are much more alive than we are. This afternoon we received news about three of the women reported missing. They were located in a spa in the Mediterranean.

No one should weep for those women in this city, who are merely the product of the fantasy of unscrupulous mercenaries. To those women I say, you are not from Tebas. And if they are to be faithful to this city, which generously received them like a mother, they must leave.

Of course, women have passed away. It is also clear that Theban men have died. However, no more than is natural for any other city such as ours. For this reason, and you will agree with me on this, noble friends, in defense of the wellbeing and sovereignty of Tebas, I declare anyone who insists on damaging our image, thereby hurting our legitimate interests, as an enemy of the city. I repeat, they will be considered enemies of the state, and they will receive, as enemies, the full weight of the law.

ADVISER: Sir, I am not here to contradict you, but this order seems a bit extreme.

CREON: What else can I do? Those corpses are in such a state that it is impossible to identify them. Why cause any more tears?

ADVISER: The voices of the unsatisfied in the city are increasing day by day. The women are only asking for justice. It seems to me that we need to do something, I don't know, give them something, some...satisfaction...

CREON: Justice! Swindlers. We all know what they want. They will have a bit of what they have never had. That way we will see the price of their pain.

ADVISER: Let's see, you, Victor, make something up, anything (*to the others*), you all get creative, that is what I pay you for, to give me solutions, not problems...

VICTOR: Sir, it's just that...Tebas is crumbling, the news about our situation is already running in other cities, we should not allow such a commotion to be made. This whole situation, though it is of course exaggerated, is damaging to our honor and sinks us in disrepute.

ADVISER: Enough, enough, Victor, do not come to me with the obvious. I repeat, get creative. Okay? You watch our back and don't give us headaches. Just take care that orders are carried out.

Scene IV. Taking a stand. The arguments of Antigone and those of Ismene

In the desert, multiple people are conducting a search. They search for the corpses of victims. Antigone is also there. Ismene has arrived looking for her. She finds her in delirious spirits and wasted away from suffering.

ISMENE: Are you sick? Ever since you first arrived you do not sleep; you do not eat... You cannot keep going like this. This is madness!

ANTIGONE: Madness is that which has sunken us in misery, both you and me and every other woman on this land. Madness is that which those who still find refuge in sleep possess. And now, what new mandate has been ordered for every single one of the citizens of this moor. What new version has been spread? What new culprit have they decided on?

ISMENE: I have not slept either. But I do not think that my exhaustion or my perpetual search can turn back the wheel of fate, which inevitably reaches us all. During our watch, I sometimes think it would be better to let her rest in peace and leave this place.

ANTIGONE: Yes. Let our sister rest in peace, but may her memory not allow us to live in peace. May the echo of her voice populate our dreams, and may our steps not find a resting place, just as her lost body has not found the earth's cover. Let our agony not cease so long as oblivion and infamy continue condemning our hearts.

ISMENE: Why do you continue to blame yourself? Why do you condemn me? Get it through your head! With burial or without it, she is most likely dead already. And we would do well to forget and to simply try to live... Many times, I have thought that the act of dying is but an instant, inevitable for anyone.

ANTIGONE: The difference is clearly in the manner of one's death.

ISMENE: But if we were to confront only the matter of death, previous sufferings would not torment us as much. We are, after all, still here. Alive!

ANTIGONE: Not I. You said it, previous sufferings. And just who can guarantee that our sister is no longer being subjected to the humiliation of suffering. Would you be able to assure that the cruelty of her agony has ceased? What if the very horror of death itself was tormenting her on this night?

ISMENE: You still believe that she is alive?

Silence.

ANTIGONE: I need certainty... anything, even that brought by her corpse. And what is more, I need the face of the culprit, those murderous hands. Justice has fled from this place, and we all need justice.

ISMENE: We need life. If Polinice is alive, she will decide when to return. After all, she always did as she pleased, and she would not be the first...

ANTIGONE: What are you trying to say?

ISMENE: Precisely that. That for you all, for my father, for you, it was always so easy to leave. After all, Ismene would stay in Tebas, waiting for you. Caring for little Polinice, maintaining the house, and keeping you updated on how everything was going. And nothing was happening. Off in the distance your myth only grew, as did your absence.

ANTIGONE: I had to leave, at the risk of losing it all. I could not choose to be anyone other than who I am.

ISMENE: We knew nothing about you, and you had no news about us. Now you come back to question me, to blame me for what happened?

ANTIGONE: No one is blaming you...

ISMENE: Yes, you are. Your gaze, your obsession, your impatience. Why can we not wait for things to clear up. This is much bigger than we are. There is too much darkness. But you are fixated on finding truths. Who knows whether we can even endure the truth... You just had to return to stir everything up, to display your courage.

ANTIGONE: It was not exactly courage that made me flee from here.

ISMENE: How I detest your extreme arrogance. To believe that you can defy destiny, defy us all, put us to the test... Antigone, the one with great clarity, the one with a duty, the one who sacrifices everything for a single truth, the one who can detach herself even from what she loves most.

ANTIGONE: You speak from fear. They have terrorized you. Now you look out only for yourself. Is that how you plan to save yourself? You think that if you are silent, they will not come for you. No one can claim the sacred name of the law as their own, not as long as the sacred right to life is the sweet bond that ties us. No one saves themselves by themselves.

ISMENE: I am not so sure that acting of our own accord is the best option. Look at other families, facing the unmendable, they do much by simply obeying. Creon has ordered that for the good of the city we are no longer to speak of homicides.

ANTIGONE: And who is Creon to decree that my dead is less dead or less a citizen than those who die peacefully every day. Is it our poverty that punishes us? Poor and foreign citizens. Sentenced to exile from the time we were little girls, to wander guiding Oedipus, our father. Carrying his misery and his guilt. And in looking upon the roads all those years, one learns her place, and that of her dead. And without burial for my sister Polinice, what will be my place? What place is yours? Or is it perhaps that only I am your sister? Were we three not all born from the same womb?

ISMENE: And what do you expect me to do? How do you expect me to find her? I am as alone and as blind as you are. I also cry for her.

ANTIGONE: Do you know what other pain is coming to overwhelm us?

ISMENE: No.

ANTIGONE: You hide what you know. Hear it from my lips then. I will see whether your heart stops beating amid misfortune or beats with more vigor.

ISMENE: What thoughts torment you now?

ANTIGONE: Listen well: we will never be certain about what happened to our sister. If she is dead, we will never find her body. Creon insists on denying the murders. Nevertheless, there are rumors that in the morgue there are more than 200 unidentified bodies. Creon is waiting for an opportunity to dump them all in the desert so they can disappear as feed for carrion birds.

It is said that he has already managed to incinerate the clothes and evidence of over 200 victims. The tyrant has ordered that this matter is not to be spoken about. He accuses us of exaggerating. And denying this genocide, he marks us as enemies to Tebas. He insists that this is a matter of a few disappearances, of women who brought this fate upon themselves. Now tell me, what do you plan to do?

ISMENE: What do you want from me?

ANTIGONE: I want you to help me.

ISMENE: How?

ANTIGONE: We have to look for Polinice in the morgue. We have to find her. And if she is dead, we must live her death. Honor her memory. It is human to give her proper burial rites. We must force Creon to recognize these crimes. Don't you realize? Denying their deaths also denies their lives.

ISMENE: Have you not understood the decree? Leave her alone! If she is dead, then it will be worthless for you to risk meeting the same fate. It is better to forget. This will pass...

ANTIGONE: She is my sister! And she is your sister as well!

ISMENE: They will apprehend you, and you will not be able to argue anything in your defense.

ANTIGONE: Do my loyalty, my love, my pain, this desperate search for justice mean nothing to you?

ISMENE: You will not rest until you manage to provoke that we also end up lying on the sand. We will see if someone dares to give us a burial then. You will not stop until the only thing left of us is one of our shoes. Forget everything, let's go away, far from here. Life is always stronger...

ANTIGONE: You want me to forget the past. You want to flee from here, to find peace in another place; but these crimes have marked us forever. And there will be nowhere to run from spilled blood. Many have died under the tyrant's complicity. They have appeared torn apart with no better a tomb than this desert, consumed by the merciless sun of this city of dead eyes. Because the God of justice does not favor everyone equally.

ISMENE: Keep in mind that we are women: we cannot fight against the men. Our weak powers force us to obey, in order not to suffer, I follow whoever is in power...

ANTIGONE: I will not insist. Follow the one in power and do what he orders. I, on the other hand, promise you that I will give my sister the peaceful rest of a proper burial. What do I care if I die? I will be at ease beside those who rest in peace. Creon has the power. A thousand times over, I would prefer to please those who lie below than those who stand above. For it is below that I will dwell forever.

ISMENE: The salt borne from tears is not endless. And neither will they flow eternally down people's cheeks. The edge of a blade can bring joy to the dying...

ANTIGONE: Perhaps blood of your blood still lies on the desert or in the morgue, but for you that is already a matter of the past.

ISMENE: I simply do not have the courage anymore.

ANTIGONE: On the day when you do find it, there will be no sisterly arms to welcome you. This struggle is not yours. You have said as much (*exits*).

Scene V.

Eurydice in public defense of Creon.

Haemon and Eurydice, his mother and wife of Creon, have attended a cotton field to speak to some of the affected families who have gathered on the site where eight unidentifiable bodies were found a week before. They gather for a religious act in memory of the victims. They are rejected by one of the mothers. The press is in attendance and intercepts them.

WOMAN 2: How dare you show your face here? We want nothing from you... I only need my daughter, give her back... someone to listen to my pleas... if you cannot return her to me alive, there is no solace you can possibly give me.

EURYDICE: Ma'am, we cannot guarantee that any of the women is your daughter. I ask that you not suffer in vain. At the moment, none of the women have been identified. Look, I promise you that my husband will not rest until he finds her. I am sure that she is alive, as are many of the girls who have already been found.

WOMAN 2: Lies! You deceive us. You have her... please return her to me. Murderers, you are a bunch of murderers.

EURYDICE (*To the camera, leaning always on Haemon at her side*): I am sorry. I am also a mother. At this moment, every woman is pained by these terrible occurrences... My only intention is to ease some of this great suffering... it is understandable that under these circumstances one looks to cast blame... It seems to me that we should surround these families with understanding...

REPORTER: Is understanding the motivation behind your husband's decree?

EURYDICE (*Disturbed*): What decree?... I have spoken with my husband about these occurrences, and I can assure you that they are a great cause of concern for him... This has caused him to lose sleep... Do not forget that he himself has been a victim of this violence.

REPORTER: Then why is the existence of discovered bodies being denied? There is word of over 200 corpses held in the morgue. Why are those responsible not punished?

EURYDICE: The morgue is empty, but I do not wish to fall for provocations... If you were, as I have been, witnesses to the great efforts he has made to bring safety and security to this city... Those women, the few who have been effectively found, they lived at risk...they led double lives...they would have died in this city or in any other...But their lives are not being put on trial. Justice has been made on their behalf. The criminals have been apprehended. The majority of cases have already been resolved.

JOURNALIST: Ma'am, for ten years multiple girls have also been found murdered, and to this day no justice made on their behalf.

EURYDICE: We also need to accept that us women have failed... (*The journalist wishes to speak*). Forgive me young lady, but those girls lived in neglect...it is obvious that they did not have responsible mothers.

JOURNALIST: So, do you believe the mothers are responsible for this situation?

EURYDICE: No. I mean... I just want to ask that we all collaborate. That is to say that we all care for ourselves responsibly. Let's take care of our children. Let's take care of ourselves. Let's care not to walk the streets alone...

JOURNALIST: Ma'am, you live in a city full of women who are alone. Are you asking them not to go out to work? How will they live? They are poor women...

EURYDICE: Precisely, because many families have been affected, and I am referring to all of those who have lost their jobs. We need to be responsible in our treatment of these issues. We must not forget that the eyes of the world are tuned in to whatever happens in Tebas. Neither should we forget that we face unfair competition from other cities that are magnifying this situation. We should let the authorities do their job. Conscious of the situation of these families, my husband ordered that the funeral costs be covered for these eight victims, which are the only ones that have been found.

HAEMON: Please excuse us, we only wished to offer our condolences, but we must respect their wishes (*he begins their exit*).

EURYDICE: Creon is a good, honest man. Over many long years I have seen him work tirelessly for this city which he loves so much. I have heard his worry over all of our futures. I have been a confidante to his great dreams of giving you glory and wealth. I am proud of him. As a citizen I would gladly give my blood to face anyone who might dare to hurt his life or his honor. I fully trust his decisions, and I know that he only wants what is best for all of you, who elected him as governor of Tebas because you put your trust in him.

Scene VI. Concealing of the murderer

A man appears with his back towards the audience. He is drenched in blood. A woman, his mother, washes his body while singing a lullaby.

WOMAN: Everything is alright. Isn't it true that everything is alright? (*silence*)...Of course, everything is alright (*she helps the man put on a shirt*), forgive me for being so hardheaded...Everything is alright, right? (*He does not respond, exits*).

WOMAN: Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women... Holy mother of God, protect him. You who as a mother know of this pain... (*She sobs*). Forgive them (feminine) Lord. You know that he only obeys, that he executes your will. Lord, you know that. Right?

Scene VII. Antigone and Haemon Reencountered

Antigone finds herself in the desartic place where she always searches for her sister. Haemon arrives. A long silence, they look at each other.

HAEMON: I am sorry (*he pauses*). I did not know where to find you. I heard nothing about you again until...today.

ANTIGONE: Why were you searching for me.

HAEMON: I don't know. I suppose it was...to help you.

ANTIGONE: Ah!

HAEMON: What do you want me to tell you? I never have the right answer.

ANTIGONE: Our last words were said a long time ago.

ANTIGONE: Are you sure?

Silence.

ANTIGONE: I understand now, you feel ashamed, like always, for your father's actions. Save your explanations. Nothing can justify a man who not only turns his back on us but also humiliates us in the midst of tragedy.

HAEMON: This is not about my father. It is about us.

ANTIGONE: About us? 'Us' is a word I reserve for those with my blood. 'Us' means my sister Polinice and I. We are the living dead that your father refuses to hear. Do not be mistaken yet again. There is a 'you'. You who belong to your father and I who belong to my sister.

HAEMON: Please do not get like that. I cannot find the right words to tell you that I am only here for you. That I have waited for you for years. That I never understood why you left. I think I have a right to know.

ANTIGONE: True, we all have a right to a small piece of truth. But I will tell you not only the reasons for my departure but also those for my return. When I left, I did so because I understood that I was about to lose myself only to end up in Creon's inventory of goods. And now life forces me to return so that Creon, your father, can return what is mine. Do you understand?

The only thing that moves me, the thing that makes me breathe, is this pain that does not cease. It is the first thought in my head when I wake up and the last before falling into my dreams' abyss. Day after day. It is a single thought. I want my sister. I want to see her face again, to hear her voice... and at the same time those evil thoughts appear, that she no longer exists, that I have lost her irredeemably. Do you understand? Can you understand this pain?

HAEMON (*he embraces her, she bursts inconsolably into tears*): I love you.

ANTIGONE: I lo...

The screech of tires is heard, Haemon is distracted.

HAEMON: What were you saying?

ANTIGONE (*she caresses his face*): Evil happens because good people do nothing.

HAEMON: Ask anything of me.

ANTIGONE: I want to enter the morgue.

Scene VIII. Deception and resentment.

WOMAN 2: They generously pay for funerary expenses, and even then, they display their pettiness. In reality, Creon is simply getting rid of the bodies he can no longer deny. He takes them outside the city, he grants them a space among those who have died from poverty. They follow us down to hell itself to make it very clear that we are not equal. In this damned city of the seven gates the dead are divided from first to fifth class. They confine our daughters to oblivion. My daughter was left buried so far from Tebas that I will never be able to visit her tomb.

Scene IX. First venture into the morgue. Evidence.

Antigone and Haemon furtively enter the morgue. Haemon stops Antigone at the door of the storage room.

HAEMON: The captain is risking his life. You have five minutes, but they will be enough. Two seconds should be enough for you to see that it is empty. You may need a few more seconds to believe my father.

He opens the door. Inside there are a number of tables with black bags atop them. One by one, Antigone uncovers the lumps, and the only thing she finds are remains, remains without any recognizable trace of humanity. Shaken by the evidence, Haemon gasps with a whimper and is left immobile.

ANTIGONE: I have to find you. I would like to stop my heart to not face this moment, but I need to know what happened to you. Alive or dead. It is unbearable to think that you should find yourself trapped within these walls and under the dark gaze of those who did not wish to protect you. And it is unbearable to think that hidden among those aberrant eyes is the one who brought you death. I must find you...God...God. Do not let me find her here.

Finally, she uncovers the body of the most recent victim. A young woman with a beautiful face, it looks as if she is simply sleeping. She takes her between her arms.

ANTIGONE: You sleep? Sweet stranger. You are not Polinice, and I don't know why my heart, tormented until just a few moments ago, feels a brief relief. Can it be perhaps because I am submitting myself to the incoherence of searching for what I do not wish to find... No, that is not true. I know perfectly well what I am searching for, and for some time already I have known what I am likely to find. I had only the faintest hope of finding you like this, so sweet and beautiful, so human, despite finding you like this, dear Polinice, just like this gentle stranger.

Footsteps are heard. Antigone jumps and turns back, resolving to flee, but she decides to return for the body she is now grievously carrying.

HAEMON (*who remains shocked*): We need to get out of here.

ANTIGONE: It is over. I will not allow her to remain here, not for one more minute...

A guard's footsteps and voice are heard. They are so close that their only choice is to hide. The guard enters, he is nervous, he is cold. He discovers the girl's body and approaches with caution.

GUARD: Wandering again? Do not run away from death's refuge.

He lifts her up. When he feels her body, he stretches her along his own. He then begins a brief funerary dance. A single rhythm, slow, intimate... He sets her on the table. Antigone and Haemon bear witness.

GUARD: Here before me, another one, a girl with bare feet, so cold, as cold as fault and shame.

He gently kisses her feet. Darkness.

Scene X. The Anecdote

Woman 1 now unravels the bandages on her fingers, just as life unravels day by day.

WOMAN 1: In this city, it is difficult to think of oneself as living. One afternoon, after work, while I waited for the bus, I was overtaken by the noise of screeching of tires. Then I heard a flurry of more than 30 gunshots. They have killed a guy, I thought. Then there was a second flurry that now felt like it was right above my head. My body reacted before I was even aware, I sheltered myself under the bench at my bus stop. My heart was overflowing, my entire pulse of life was hanging by a thread, then a third flurry...Finally, silence...By the way, I am still alive.

Scene XI. Antigone's second venture into the morgue. Capture.

Antigone enters the morgue alone. The guard awaits concealed by darkness. He surprises her while she is taken by the girl's corpse.

ANTIGONE: I have returned, I will not disturb your sleep. I will only take you to the warm embrace of the earth.

GUARD: What are you doing here? These are not business hours. Do you know what you are looking for?

ANTIGONE: Please, let me take her.

GUARD: Take her? Are you crazy? Are you not aware of the decree?

ANTIGONE: You also have a family. You would not allow this to happen to them.

GUARD: Those of us who live at night have no family. It is better to find some entertainment when you cannot sleep.

ANTIGONE: I know what your orders are, but I will not leave this place alone.

GUARD: Ah, women! Always so full of stories! (*He swings over her and pins her*).

ANTIGONE: Don't touch me!

GUARD: Are you not supposed to be the one who brings warmth? Your hands are filthy.

ANTIGONE: So they are. Tired of scraping the earth.

GUARD: Does it not disgust you, touching cadavers? What do you have there? (*He forces his hand below her skirt, he hugs her, and dances with her as he did with the dead girl*). You are so warm. But I am a professional, and I must turn you in.

Scene XII. The choice of entering the shelter. The Plague

Woman 1 continues her story, absorbed in rewrapping her bandages.

WOMAN 1: Once I got home, I turned on the radio. That is how I knew that the matter had been a shootout between two bands of traffickers. That stray bullets ended the poor life of a poor man... an insufferable stench was suffocating me... A woman was left lying before the eyes of her four-year old little one... My daughter is the same age. I was suffocating...I wished to flee, but where to? That night, I decided to enter the shelter... Some of them say it is an exaggeration. I just know I am a woman, alone. All I have is my daughter... if they take her from me, they take away my world...there is an insufferable stench up there, in the city. Is it the plague?

Scene XIII. The confrontation between Antigone and Creon. The arguments

Creon's palace. The guard enters while dragging Antigone. She is handcuffed.

CREON (*He recognizes her*): Why are you bringing this one? Where did you apprehend her?

GUARD: Her name is Antigone.

CREON: I know that already.

GUARD: She tried to take a cadaver from the morgue. She says it is her sister... I caught her, even though she had already entered the morgue the night before. Today, following your orders, I did not leave my post for even a second. I knew she had to return. A thief always returns.

CREON: Do you admit what you did?

ANTIGONE: I just went in for what was mine.

CREON: Did you know what was ordered regarding those dead women?

ANTIGONE: How could I not? You were always efficient when it came to making your will known. Your orders were publicized throughout the entire city. They were clear and precise.

CREON: Perhaps you believed that being the daughter of proud Oedipus would be enough to put you above the law.

ANTIGONE: No, I did not think that.

CREON: The law was made primarily for you, Antigone. The law was made primarily for the daughters of kings! And still you decided to mock the law!

ANTIGONE: Because it was your law.

CREON: It is the law of this city.

ANTIGONE: The law of a mortal can be ignored by another mortal. I know that you will command my execution, which would be to my benefit in my atrocious state of suffering. I entered to rescue the corpse of my mother's daughter, to give it burial and the final rest that neither you nor anyone else can deny her.

CREON: You violate the law, you break order, and to top it off you show yourself to be satisfied. You pretend to showcase your crime as something admirable.

ANTIGONE: When the tyrant breaks the law, he does so in the name of order. And he calls the citizens' dissidence a crime. Rebellion. Danger. You speak of your law? You, who break divine laws, natural laws? You, who have assassinated justice?

CREON: You are lucky. I do not understand why I have put up with every single one of your words. There is no sign of remorse in you. I cannot punish you as is merited because you carry such demented pride.

ANTIGONE: For you it has not been enough that someone who did not give my sister life gave her death. Her life has already been taken from her. Now you intend to ignore her, erase her, strip her of her name and history. You intend to leave no trace of this infamy, prolonged and repeated over the course of ten years. You deny identity to my sister and to all the dead of this war you have sustained. You believe that in this way you can guarantee that your acts and omissions will be forgotten. You think that this way you will retain control and that cursed impunity with which you have devastated every notion of justice from this land.

CREON: It is in my hands.

ANTIGONE: You think your law will stop us? That by threatening us you will silence our voices, our laments?

CREON: Do you think there are others that see things as you do?

ANTIGONE: Others also have eyes and are astonished.

CREON: I would advise anyone who values their own life not to make your words their own. According to you, the gaze of others indicts me. That is not what the voices that have elected me governor of Ciudad Tebas say. Do you know why? Because they enjoy the incredible wealth that I provide them. Because this, the great city, is much more than its problems. Because we learned to tame the desert. Because we, the people of Tebas, proudly confront slander. Because none of the scandals that have been fabricated against us has wounded us. Because the bullet that crossed my head did not decapitate the state. Against your rebelliousness I place the strength and the wealth I provide for them. Meanwhile, your foolish voice only attracts calamities. If you could understand, I would explain that it is not easy to steer this ship believe me, the sweet honey of power vanishes immediately. I do not have ears for everyone, I do not have answers to all demands. Even God is selective. I can only occupy myself with the issues of the majority. I dictate measures that will guarantee Tebas' survival. For this reason, my rod is the law. It rules for everyone, and it does not allow for insolence.

ANTIGONE: Your argument is your law. A law turned prostitute which shelters whoever is able to pay. The law of a single man is no law at all. I demand justice from you.

CREON: And this city demands silence from you. Tebas no longer recognizes you, it no longer calls you its daughter. It casts you from its bosom like the plague which contaminates everything, which poisons all things.

ANTIGONE: Who is the one casting me out? Since you have been ruler, the number of women who inhabit this city has diminished, and it will continue to decrease.

CREON: Of what are you accusing me?

ANTIGONE: Of contempt, of indifference, of complicity. It does not matter that your hands are not the ones claspings the neck. It is your will that sheds the blood of women, for whom you obviously do not govern.

CREON: What are you implying?

ANTIGONE: I do not imply. Listen well to what I am telling you. You are responsible for the impunity under which this genocide is being committed.

CREON: You are boundless in your accusations. Have you no fear?

ANTIGONE: What about you?

Silence.

CREON: Were I a common tyrant, long ago I would have ripped your tongue out, torn your limbs off, or cast you down a well. But you see some hesitation in my eyes. This is why you turn to mockery. Attack while you can. How far do you expect to get?

Desperate, he twists her wrists.

ANTIGONE: Let me go!

CREON: No. I am the strongest.

ANTIGONE: Really? You know what I see in your eyes? Fear...a terrible fear. That is why you do not kill me immediately. Maybe it is more comfortable to keep a living but silent Antigone.

CREON: Be quiet!

ANTIGONE: You want to silence me, but here you are drinking my words because you know I am right. Do you think I don't see it in your eyes, the fact that you know? You know I am right, but you will never admit it because you are holding on to your power like a beast.

CREON: For the last time, be quiet! I command you!

ANTIGONE: Poor Creon! With broken nails full of dirt, with the bruises your guards gave me, with my poverty... I am queen.

Silence.

CREON: Then pity me. Do not force me to kill you.

ANTIGONE: There is no strength more powerful than dignity. Have pity on this city and yourself, for you will not be able to escape catastrophe. You know you lie when you promise a future of wealth. One need only look at the sky to see that chaos surrounds us... Do not cling to your power at the expense of blood... I beg you, give me back my sister.

Creon takes an urn and takes out ashes.

CREON: Well, here you have her. This one or any other one, I have no way of knowing. It does not matter. Dust to dust. When you and I are no longer here, the greatness of Tebas will continue to be talked about.

ANTIGONE: They will speak of blood, and the abominable nature of your actions and the acts you allowed. History will call you a traitor of your people, and you will have at your back the door through which tyrants leave.

CREON: What do you know of politics? You are a woman and shelter yourself with that to stop my wrath. If it were not for the fact that my hand cannot strike such a blow to my son Haemon's heart...with your ridiculous rhetoric of a mourning sister, you have managed that I allow you to leave on your own two feet and that I forget the perpetrated offenses. Hate has not bloomed inside me, but be careful. A chance like this I only give once...

ANTIGONE: You are a fool Creon, any humanity in your heart has been lost. You never understood that you condemn to death those who are already dead. Why should I fear punishment from you? Be aware. Since the day they killed my sister, I am dead! (*Exits*).

Creon collapses.

Scene XVI. Creon's Dilemmas

Victor enters quietly. He carries a glass of water. Creon drinks it. Victor begins his exit in silence.

CREON: Wait.

VICTOR: Your wife called, and she was very shaken. She says she does not know what to tell the press.

CREON (*unleashed all his pent-up fury*): [TELL HER] TO BE QUIET!

Silence. Victor observes him.

CREON: What are you thinking, Victor?

VICTOR: That...we are putting ourselves in too much danger.

CREON: Go on.

VICTOR: It worries me that this whole scandal may have crossed the borders of Ciudad Tebas. The foreign press cannot be contained. Our allies in Argos called me this morning. They were very anxious about what is happening. Surely our negotiations will see themselves affected.

CREON: What do you suggest?

VICTOR: Breaking our silence is most urgent. We must run press releases that refute the versions being told about our situation. Above all else, we must show ourselves to be secure and optimistic before our allies. If you will allow me, I will make it so articles favoring us will be published in the most important papers of all Boeotia.

CREON: Do it.

VICTOR: The next thing will be to remove a few figureheads in the army.

CREON: Impossible in these times of war!

VICTOR: At least those most hated by the Thebans.

CREON: If I do so the alliances will break, and we will lose control. Everything will overflow.

VICTOR: It will not be that way if we make a pact with the generals to simply move them from the line of fire. They might even feel more at ease in another post. There are already too many inquiries about them.

CREON: Let me think it over.

VICTOR: And concerning that woman and the others... I see two possible paths.

CREON: Which are...

VICTOR: Provoke an encounter. We can create a special tribunal to take care of this matter, and so we will no longer have to carry this matter directly. Even among the dissatisfied there are those who ask for this. We could give them that satisfaction (*Pause wherein Creon meditates on the solution*). We will at least gain time.

CREON: And what do I do with Antigone?

Victor is silent.

VICTOR: The law is the law. It seems to me that you are yielding too much. In this current situation, whoever is not with us is against us. That woman is committed to displaying the evidence that would doom us. Whether she wants to or not, she gives arguments to our enemies. Whoever proceeds like that can only be called a traitor and deserves that the full weight of the law should befall her. And if the law is not enforced, we should at least guarantee that her criminal audacity will remain a secret.

CREON: For the time being, take care of the guard and the press releases. Let me think about the rest.

VICTOR: If you will excuse me.

CREON: Thank you, Victor.

Exit Victor. Creon remains alone, pondering.

Scene XV. Haemon confronts his father. He decides to side with Antigone.

Enter Haemon. Silence.

CREON: Do not look at me like that.

HAEMON: How?

CREON: Are you looking for a father? Are you here playing your role as a lover to advocate the personal matters of that girl, who has dared to defy me throughout the entire city?

HAEMON: That is the matter that has brought me here. And I hope that I will not displease you in my role as a son when I inform you of the rumors that are circulating in your role as a ruler.

CREON: Depart from this place, insolent boy. The only thing missing now is for you to raise your voice at me to the pleasure of my enemy.

HAEMON: Father, you have to listen to me. As your son, it is my duty to inform you. In the city, a profound sickness rules. The people tremble at your very name. Do not kid yourself, your advisors will not tell you anything. Outside there is a storm, and they tell you that it is a simple breeze.

CREON: What ruler has no detractors? My enemies are divided even in their discontent. Some whine about taxes, others about violence, and even more about unemployment. Day after day I hear their complaints. Thanks to my authority and power, I keep them united and separated at the same time. But if I showed myself to be hesitant or indecisive, then anyone would be ready to usurp my command.

Silence.

HAEMON: That great strength and that courage, that giant God that took me in his arms and saved me from the monsters and the shadows, was that you?

CREON: Yes, Haemon.

HAEMON: All that care, all that pride, all that love, has it all come to this?

CREON: Yes.

HAEMON: It is not true. Father, this is not you. It is not today. We are not together at the foot of this border of fear. You are still powerful, like when I was little. I am too alone, and the world is too bare if I can no longer admire you.

CREON: Do not judge me, Haemon. Not you too. We are alone, Haemon. The world is bare. And you have admired me for too long. However, considering the love I have for you as your father, on this occasion I consented to pardoning her. Were it not for you, I would have never failed to uphold the law that I myself established. But there will be no second chance.

HAEMON: Then punish those guilty for these dead women and return the bodies to the proper people because it is certain that Antigone will persist in her effort.

CREON: I will no longer think as your father, and she will receive the promised penalty.

HAEMON: Father, it is not only her. The entire city calls for justice, but they hold their tongue due to fear. Do not wait for them to come before you to seek your wrath, but understand that when they dare to do so they will come seeking your head, not your reasons.

CREON: Well, my hand will show itself to be implacable.

HAEMON: Father, you have lost yourself. Do not continue turning your back on your people.

CREON: Could it be that you have believed all of that? What is a people? For whom does one govern? With whom does one govern? Poor son of mine, so naïve. This man you see here before you, one day he awoke to be king of Tebas, and that means everything. I will not ask the people how to govern. I give the orders as I please. Otherwise, it would be as letting the horses guide the cart and drag the driver.

HAEMON: When they feel that the stench of death permeates this city, they could be riled up and, in their fear, fall down a precipice along with the cart and the driver.

CREON: Are you threatening me?

HAEMON: No, I simply fear for you.

CREON: You fear that your bed will be left empty.

HAEMON: I would call that foolishness if it were not coming from my father.

CREON: I would call your speech insolent were it not coming from a woman's slave.

HAEMON: I'd rather be a woman's slave than yours.

CREON: At last, you admit it, and you cannot take it back.

HAEMON: I do not intend to do so.

CREON: Leave! And do not show yourself before me ever again.

HAEMON: Do not tremble. You will never see anyone else stand boldly before you. By the way, I found more than 200 women's corpses in the morgue. Will you continue denying they exist?

Exit Haemon. Creon collapses.

Scene XVI. Sentence.

CREON: Victor!

VICTOR: How can I help you?

CREON: Let my law be enforced!

VICTOR: Are you sure, sir? I saw your son leave, and he was very upset. It may be prudent to wait.

CREON: There is no helping this. My son will get over it eventually. This is the lesser evil. Take care of everything.

Victor accedes and exits.

Scene XVII. Execution.

Antigone is in the deserted plain where she always searches for her sister. Haemon arrives by her side. She attempts to leave. He stops her. She tries to tell him something. He softly covers her lips.

HAEMON: Do not reject me. I am here, and I am absolutely yours. You have no choice because I will never leave you. Accept me as you would your shadow.

ANTIGONE: What are you saying?

HAEMON: Here are my arms, so that you can rest from your grief. Here is my heart, as clean as it was at the moment of my birth. Here I entreat you with my veins through which the past no longer runs. I have come to be born for you and to follow the truth of your voice wherever you desire (*Antigone looks at him lightly*). Now, stop doubting. We do not have much time.

ANTIGONE: I love you.

Haemon is distracted by the sound of screeching tires which obfuscates Antigone's voice.

HAEMON: What did you say?

ANTIGONE: That I love you.

A flurry of gunshots is heard. Haemon falls dead, protecting Antigone with his body. He never heard the words of the woman he loved.

ANTIGONE: I love you. I love you... forever.

Scene XXVIII. Despair and the question.

Antigone walks in the desert. She stops. She takes off her shoes. She restarts her errant walking.

ANTIGONE: You are mourning, city of mine. You must be mourning. They have assassinated all hope. The law has abandoned you. The only law which is a sister of life and love with which the bonds that tie us are woven. Your traitorous rulers have given you away to infamy. They grow their wealth from your misery. And not satisfied with your laments and tears they want the blood of your sons and daughters. They want to make you bow with horrors, they want to subdue you with terrors until no corner of your soul is left without trembling, until your protesting voices are muted. Until you are a slave of your own volition. Weep for your sins and the sins of those who govern you, allowing the sand to drink your very blood. Justice has abandoned you. Do you realize? There is no justice. And there will be no justice until all of your citizens – all of them, do you hear? – Wash away the blame of these crimes. Until all of your children cry the bitter tears of the dead desert women.

Dark ending.