

# *Antigone* on the Contemporary World Stage

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OXFORD  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

## Mobilizing Antigone

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*Antigone* is perhaps the only play, classical or modern, to have been (re)produced all over the world,<sup>1</sup> and an enormous number of these productions have reconceived and remade the play to address modern local—and in some cases international and global—issues and concerns. As such, *Antigone* provides a useful site and subject through which to analyse what happens to a single play in a wide variety of cultural contexts: why and how is it mobilized, what issues has it been used to address, what does it do, and, finally, what do these numerous re-visions reveal about the play itself and the cultures and historical moments in which it is performed?

A number of books, including *Dionysus since 69: Greek Tragedy at the Dawn of the Third Millennium*, *Medea in Performance 1500–2000*, *Agamemnon in Performance 458 BC to AD 2004*, and George Steiner's wide-ranging 1984 study of *Antigone* in the European tradition, identify and analyse a relatively recent phenomenon: the re-visioning of classical Greek tragedy in contemporary theatre.<sup>2</sup> While these books deal primarily with the reception of Greek drama

<sup>1</sup> Because of the history of colonialism, and worldwide patterns of cultural expansion, influence, and globalization, it is largely true that Shakespeare and the Greeks, as exemplars of high Western culture, have travelled the world, whereas classics such as *Sundiata*, the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, and *The Monkey King*, while they have now entered the global canon, have done so much more recently. While Shakespeare's plays have been produced around the world, no single play has been produced in as many countries as *Antigone*; and, while *Oedipus Tyrannus* has been produced in many countries around the world, it does not appear to have inspired as many culturally specific rewritings. *Antigone*, on the other hand, has been produced in so many countries that it is almost literally true to say it has been done all over the world.

<sup>2</sup> Other studies include: J. Axer and M. Borowska (1999), 'The Tradition of Ancient Greek Theatre in Poland,' in Platon Mavromoustakos (ed.), *Productions of Ancient Greek Drama in Europe During Modern Times*. Kastaniotis: Athens, 69–74; S. Bérard (2008), 'From the Greek Stage of the Martinican Shores: A Caribbean *Antigone*,' *Theatre Research International* 33: 40–51; F. Decrus, (2003), 'About Western Man and the "Gap" that is Constantly Threatening Him: Or How to Deal With the Tragic When Staging Greek Tragedies Today?' *Euphrosyne* 31: 610–782; J. Maritz (2002), 'Greek Drama in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe,' in John Barsby (ed.), *Greek and Roman Drama: Translation and Performance*, Stuttgart: Metzler, 197–215; D. Williams (1991), 'Greek

in the West, several other books, including *The Athenian Sun in an African Sky*, *Ancient Sun, Modern Light: Greek Drama on the Modern Stage, Classics and Colonialism*, *Classics in Post-Colonial Worlds*, *Crossroads in the Black Aegean*, and *Staging of Classical Drama around 2000*, demonstrate that the use of classical Greek tragedy to address current local, political, and social issues has become a worldwide phenomenon. However, *Antigone on the Contemporary World Stage* is the first book to analyse what has happened to a single play as it has been mobilized around the world.

This book comes at a time of overwhelming international interest both in the figure of Antigone and in modern adaptations of the play: several scholarly conferences in 2007 and 2008 focused on Antigone (most notably the interdisciplinary 'Year of Antigones' events in Chicago (USA) organized by faculty at DePaul University, and a conference in Kent (UK) entitled 'Antigone in Hispanic Studies'); the journal *Mosaic* devoted its September 2008 issue to the figure of Antigone in philosophy and politics; OUP published *Interrogating Antigone in Postmodern Philosophy and Criticism* (edited by S. E. Wilmer and Audrone Zukauskaite, 2010); numerous rewritings of *Antigone* are being produced around the world; and numerous dissertations are being written about the figure, the character, and the stagings.<sup>3</sup> Our book, however, is the first to focus on *Antigone* in performance—the importance of which we will address later.

The essays in this book—and the post-Second World War productions they analyse in Argentina, Canada, The Congo, Egypt, Finland, Georgia, Greece, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Poland, Taiwan, Syria, Turkey, and the United States—highlight the numerous ways in which social, political, historical, and cultural contexts transform the material,

Drama in Taiwan: Persistent and Prophetic Paradigms,' in S. Patsalidis and E. Sakellandrou (eds.), *(Dis)placing Classical Greek Theatre*. Thessaloniki: University Studio Press, 210–20; H. Altana, (1991), 'Greek Tragedy in the Netherlands from Mendes da Costa to Simons and Kock,' in P. Mavromoustakos (ed.), *Productions of Ancient Greek Drama During Modern Times*. Kastanotis: Athens, 131–56; M. de Fatima Sousa e Silva (1999), 'Le Portugal de nos jours et les représentations de théâtre grec,' in P. Mavromoustakos (ed.), *Productions of Ancient Greek Drama During Modern Times*. Kastanotis: Athens, 105–9; E. Stehliková (2000), 'Antigone and its Czech Audience,' in S. Godde and T. Heinze (eds.), *Skenika: Beiträge zum antiken Theater und seiner Rezeption*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 403–8; C. Staboaert (2008), 'The Mind Taken Hostage: Antigone's Corporeal Memory,' in *Mind the Gap. Mosaic* 41/3: 137–52; E. Stehliková (2001), 'Productions of Greek and Roman Drama on the Czech Stage,' *Eirene* 37: 71–160.

The Archive for Performances of Greek and Roman Drama (APGRD) and the further links on their website provide information on European productions of *Antigone*. ([www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk](http://www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk))

<sup>3</sup> These include Christopher D. Love, 'Creating Tragic Spectators: Rebellion and Ambiguity in World Tragedy,' University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 2009; Victoria Brunn, 'From Tragedy to Ritual: Latin American Adaptations of Sophocles' *Antigone*,' Columbia, 2009; and Keri Walsh, 'Antigone in Modernism: Classicism, Feminism, and Theatres of Protest,' Princeton, 2010.

the ways in which artists and audiences around the world interact with the material, and the variety of issues *Antigone* has been used to address. For example, *Antigone's Emigration*, written and directed by the Syrian actor/playwright/director Jihad Saad, addresses violence and displacement in the Arab world and its effects on women; Miyagi Satoshi's *Antigone* in Tokyo mounted a pointedly female individual challenge to the political authority of a collective Creon played by multiple actors; in Victor Ardit's Greek production, Antigone questions the politics of the Left, asserting her independence from the ideology of her fellow Leftists by insisting on burying the body of a partisan sacrificed to internal disputes among the Left; and two productions of *Antigone* in Manipur, a police state in north-east India, have been used to articulate a regional identity that is distinct from, if not in opposition to, the 'national' identity and culture imposed on Manipur's citizens by the Indian government.

#### UBIQUITOUS BUT NOT UNIVERSAL

The scope of this book might seem to imply that *Antigone*, and by extension Greek drama as a whole, is 'universal'. However, our focus on performance allows us to see the play/figure not as an exemplar of 'universal high Western culture', but as a play/figure that has been remade in and on other terms, and consequently now 'belongs' to the world in a wide variety of forms.

In Femi Osofisan's *Tegonni*, set in colonial Nigeria but dealing with issues of political freedom in the Nigeria of the 1990s, Osofisan uses Antigone to challenge the assumption that *Antigone* is the universal cultural norm. Two characters named Antigone and Tegonni both appear on stage. When Antigone notes that her story is being told, another character, Yemisi, responds: 'Your story! Sorry, you're mistaken. This is the story of Tegonni, our sister. Funny, the names sound almost the same...'<sup>4</sup> Tina Chanter points out that

neither Tegonni nor Antigone is Sophocles's Antigone, but both of them are inspired by her, a fact that Osofisan problematizes even as he draws on the Antigone of Greek mythology. As Yemisi contests Antigone's assumption that it is her story, insisting that it is in fact Tegonni's story, Osofisan confronts the question of how a postcolonial nation fosters a culture that is neither a mere repetition of its colonial heritage, nor merely a reactive rejection of it.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Osofisan (1999: 25).

<sup>5</sup> Chanter (2011).

By flipping the power dynamic between Antigone and Tegonni, Osofisan highlights Antigone's unquestioned assumption that canonical aspects of Western culture (such as herself) are or should be familiar to everyone around the world because they are universal. And, to highlight the inequality of her assumption, Osofisan makes it clear that Antigone does not expect to have to know anything about Nigerian culture.

Like *Tegonni*, many plays and productions seem to honour Greek tragedy by using *Antigone* while simultaneously undermining or dismantling aspects of the cultural hegemony Greek drama can represent—particularly in certain non-Western countries where Greek tragedy, and by extension Greek culture, often stand for imperialism and colonialism because they have been used to justify the colonial project, or to prove colonial cultural superiority. In their discussion of African versions of *Antigone* and *Oedipus the King* in *Crossroads in the Black Aegean*, Barbara Goff and Michael Simpson have focused on the ways in which modern adaptations are *consciously different* from their Greek ante-texts, and they frame those differences as political, arguing that these adaptations 'know and can meet the standards of European literature... question the scope and authority of those literary standards, and ultimately... demonstrate an alternative beyond the polarity of the oral and the literary on which those standards depend'.<sup>6</sup> However, Goff and Simpson pay equal attention to the ways in which these plays and productions help to articulate and define new cultures by consciously performing their *differences* from the Greek 'original'. Furthermore, while many of the plays they analyse have achieved their own canonical status (*The Island*, *Tegonni*, *The Gospel at Colonus*, *Burial at Thebes*), Goff and Simpson point out that, 'rather than seeking either to join and thus change the canon... or, at the other extreme, to repudiate any notion of a canon, these plays all resist the canon's own model of cultural relationships and in some cases... propose alternatives'.<sup>7</sup> Modern adaptations of Greek plays, then, are important for the ways in which they use the Western canon to challenge Western value systems and assumptions about culture, and for the ways in which they decentre Western culture. Many of the chapters in this volume pay significant attention to the ways in which adaptation can be more of a challenge to the 'original' than a derivative of it. As Goff and Simpson have written, this shifts 'emphasis from the achieved state of these plays as "liberated" to the work of the adaptations [and remakings] in making them so'.<sup>8</sup>

Collectively, artists discussed in this volume look at the Antigone story as a global rather than a Western property to be reimaged, remixed, and

<sup>6</sup> Goff and Simpson (2007: 24).  
<sup>8</sup> Goff and Simpson (2007: 57).

<sup>7</sup> Goff and Simpson (2007: 30).

appropriated in response to specific historical, cultural, and artistic needs. As Jill Lane has written of Jose Watanabe's Peruvian production staged by Grupo Cultural Yuyachkani:

To call this newest Antigone a 'modern adaptation' of Sophocles' tragedy would be, I think, to tell the theatrical story the wrong way around—or... to cast the play in a progressive historical genealogy that necessarily obscures the more radical relation emergent between the two texts. While rightfully admired, Sophocles' drama does not mean much in contemporary Ayacucho or Lima in itself—or in contemporary London or Chicago or Prague, for that matter. The story of Antigone which Sophocles premiered is not relevant to the present because its story, structure, or narrative are 'timeless' or 'universal', as though the play existed outside of time or had transcended its own history to be bestowed upon Lima as a kind of literary gift. No. If the story of Antigone is told again it is because certain human, social struggles repeat themselves at intervals in history, and a complex, rich structure like the narrative of Antigone becomes—sadly—meaningful, again and again, to express the horror of the unburied dead, the costs of civil war, the wreck of atrocity, and the work of the survivors, so often women, who come after looking to bury the dead. It is not just that it has again become thematically relevant (two historical moments that involve women burying their dead), but that this particular tragic form seems to have the capacity to give expression to the nature of catastrophe in each moment. As the late Bert O. States put it in a discussion of modern tragedy, 'One doesn't write a play in order to demonstrate the tragic, but to say something about the face of disaster in a specifically tragic world.' Contemporary Peru is one such 'specifically tragic world' and it needed, created, and helped shape the specific *Antigona* that there took place.<sup>9</sup>

In fact, Moira Fradinger, in her article on Argentine productions of *Antigone*, makes the case that *Antigone* is Argentina's 'national play', while Fiona Macintosh makes the same case for Ireland, thus dislocating an unquestioned assumption about whose culture—and which time period—*Antigone* belongs to.

The chapters in this book focus on productions that remake not only the material itself, but ways of seeing the world. Félix Morriseau-Leroy's 1953 *Antigone* is [best] understood as a postcolonial appropriation of foreign cultural material from within the cultural and political legacy of its appropriating culture, rather than as a simple adaptation.<sup>10</sup> In other words, rather than adapting Sophocles to Haiti, Morriseau-Leroy adapts Sophocles from a Haitian point of view. This radically shifts not only the material itself, but the conceptual framework that is applied to and emerges from the material.

If there is anything 'universal' about Antigone, it lies in the way both the play and the character have been mobilized. As Edward Ziter notes: 'There's a

<sup>9</sup> Lane (2007: 523).

<sup>10</sup> Fradinger, Chapter 3, this volume.

reason people are interested in *Antigone*. We're in an age of civil war, and bodies are being left on the ground unburied.<sup>11</sup> John Kani, who co-created (with Athol Fugard and Winston Ntshona) a remaking of *Antigone* set in apartheid South Africa, has said that '*Antigone* addresses itself to any corner of the world where the human spirit is being oppressed, where people sit in jail because of their fight for human dignity, for freedom'.<sup>12</sup> Contributors to this volume discuss productions in which *Antigone* is a freedom fighter (for example, Mee, Macintosh, Robinson, and Seamon), but they also discuss ways in which *Antigone* has been used to address gender issues (for example, the Argentine productions, several of the productions in Egypt, Miyagi's production in Tokyo, and *Eurydice's Cry* in Istanbul), issues of cultural expression that are political (for example, the production in Taiwan, the Indonesian production, the Haitian production, and the productions in Manipur), and memory (for example, the Syrian production, Sylvain Bemb'a's play, and the Italian production). Hana Worthen's chapter even discusses a production that attempted—unsuccessfully—to be politically and culturally 'neutral'. In this volume we distinguish between *Antigone*'s ubiquity—the fact that she can and has addressed almost every corner of the world—and her 'universality'.

#### THE TEXTS: TRANSLATING, ADAPTING, REMAKING, REMIXING

Despite the appearance of *Antigone* and Creon in Sophocles's *Oedipus the King* and *Oedipus at Colonus*, and of the conflict between the brothers Polyneices and Eteocles and its repercussions in Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes* and Euripides' *Phoenician Women*, as well as their appearance in fragments of Greek works no longer extant, Sophocles's *Antigone* survived to become the canonical version of this myth, and his presence is therefore felt behind later remakings. However, no tragic version of a well-known myth had this kind of stable authority during the classical period when Sophocles wrote his play. The theatrical contests at Athens City Dionysia invited poets to compete regularly with *new* versions of these stories that reflected and spoke to changing times, and later Greek and Roman literature offered constant variations on familiar mythical themes. In other words, as Edith Hall makes clear, *Antigone* has always been already adapted,<sup>13</sup> and the current tradition of

<sup>11</sup> Ziter (2010).

<sup>12</sup> In an interview with Martin Phillips in Feb. 2000.

<sup>13</sup> See Hall, Chapter 2, this volume.

adapting, remaking, and remixing stories based on Greek myths thus corresponds to what was, even in Antiquity, understood to be a continuously evolving tradition—much as stories found in the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* are retold in many media, and these retellings are not expected to correspond to an 'ur-telling' much less an 'ur-text'—although certain parts of *Antigone*'s story were selectively and more deliberately preserved for generations. The nineteenth-century notion of attempting to perform Greek tragedies in an 'authentic' fashion is long-since dead, though references in performance to what little we know about ancient Greek theatre can evoke aspects of that impulse for a variety of reasons. Thus, while this volume is always in one sense about Sophocles's play, it assumes that no production ever can, or would ever want to (without contradiction), put his inevitably elusive text on stage.

Why, then, refer to the text at all? In some situations a production might want to use the knowledge an audience has of *Antigone* by playing with or against it. In this way productions consciously leverage 'the meaning created by the reference to build something new'.<sup>14</sup> In his book *Remix*, Lawrence Lessig asks rhetorically:

Why... can't the remixer simply make his own content? Why is it important to select a drumbeat from a certain Beatles recording? Or a Warhol image? Why not simply record your own drumbeat? Or paint your own painting? The answer to these questions is not hard if we focus again upon why these tokens have meaning. Their meaning comes not from the content of what they say; it comes from the reference, which is expressible only if it is the original that gets used. Images or sounds collected from real-world examples become 'paint on a palette'. And it is this 'cultural reference'... that 'has emotional meaning to people... When you hear four notes of the Beatles' 'Revolution', it means something.<sup>15</sup>

Productions that remix Sophocles's *Antigone* invoke the political questions raised by the play and the largely political legacy of its performance tradition.

Because of the wide range of approaches represented here, we use a variety of terms to describe the productions discussed in this volume, including: translation, adaptation, remaking, and remixing. We use the term 'translation' to refer to a performance that attempts to follow closely the language and structure of the 'original' text, although it is worth noting that attempting to reflect the original meaning in another language, or shifting the political and cultural context of a play (which is part of the act of translation), changes the meaning of the play, and therefore makes such versions adaptations more than translations.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Lessig (2008: 76).

<sup>15</sup> Lessig (2008: 74).

<sup>16</sup> See Mee, Chapter 5, this volume, for one of many examples.

When we use the term 'adaptation', we follow not only Linda Hutcheon's definition of the term, but her use of it. Hutcheon defines adaptation as 'deliberate, announced, and extended revisitations of prior works' (p. xiv).<sup>17</sup> She points out that, of necessity, 'there will be a constant oscillation between [the prior work] and the new adaptation we are experiencing' (p. xv). If we do not know the prior work, this oscillation will not occur, and 'we will not experience the [new] work as an adaptation' (p. xv). However, she goes on to say: 'if we happen to read the novel after we see the film adaptation of it, we again feel that oscillation, though this time in reverse' (p. xv). Hutcheon reminds us that 'oscillation is not hierarchical' (p. xv), even if most theories of adaptation are. Her agenda, which we share, is 'to challenge the explicitly and implicitly negative cultural evaluation of things like . . . adaptation, which are seen as secondary and inferior' (p. xii). Conversations about adaptation tend to privilege (consciously or unconsciously) the so-called 'original' text, and are driven by ideas of 'fidelity' to a prior text. Hutcheon argues, and the productions we analyse in this volume confirm, that 'there are many and varied motives behind adaptation and few involve faithfulness' (p. xiii). As is true of Brecht's and Anouilh's adaptations, which have in turn been adapted by other playwrights and directors,<sup>18</sup> 'earlier adaptations may, in fact, be just as important as contexts for some adaptations as any "original" . . . Multiple versions exist laterally, not vertically' (p. xiii). Jill Lane continues this thought when she points out that

the usual habit of casting contemporary renditions of the classics as copies (versions, adaptations, and so on) advances an inherently conservative understanding of theatre history: one in which a dull chronology (Sophocles was 'first'; the others came 'later') flattens the dynamic relation the contemporary plays themselves invoke with the past. That habit usually reflects the potential aesthetic or political value of these works back onto the original (*Antigone* is still relevant!).<sup>19</sup>

Lane calls for an approach to theatre history, 'to the meaning, role, and presence of the theatrical past,' that is 'as "modern" as the plays we otherwise celebrate under that name'.<sup>20</sup> Examples of adaptations discussed in this volume include *Yup'ik Antigone*, the Finnish production discussed by Hana Worthen, Miyagi's production in Tokyo, Andrzej Wajda's 'Solidarity' production in Cracow, and the Georgian production analysed by Lorna Hardwick.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Hutcheon (2006). Page references are given in the text in parentheses.

<sup>18</sup> See Mee, Chapter 5; Foley, Chapter 20; and Hardwick, Chapter 21, this volume.

<sup>19</sup> Lane (2007: 529).

<sup>20</sup> Lane (2007: 529).

<sup>21</sup> See Worthen, Chapter 22; Smethurst, Chapter 12; Robinson, Chapter 11; Hardwick, Chapter 21, this volume.

We make a distinction here between an adaptation (for example, *Yup'ik Antigone*<sup>22</sup>), and a remaking (for example, *Eurydice's Cry*<sup>23</sup>). The definition of remaking we use comes from playwright Charles L. Mee, who has remade a number of Greek tragedies:

There is no such thing as an original play.

None of the classical Greek plays were original: they were all based on earlier plays or poems or myths. And none of Shakespeare's plays are original: they are all taken from earlier work. *As You Like It* is taken from a novel by Thomas Lodge published just 10 years before Shakespeare put on his play without attribution or acknowledgment. Chunks of *Antony and Cleopatra* are taken verbatim, and, to be sure, without apology, from a contemporary translation of Plutarch's Lives. Brecht's *Caucasian Chalk Circle* is taken from a play by Klabund, on which Brecht served as dramaturg in 1926; and Klabund had taken his play from an early Chinese play.

Sometimes playwrights steal stories and conversations and dreams and intimate revelations from their friends and lovers and call this original. And sometimes some of us write about our own innermost lives, believing that, then, we have written something truly original and unique. But, of course, the culture writes us first, and then we write our stories. When we look at a painting of the virgin and child by Botticelli, we recognize at once that it is a Renaissance painting—that it is a product of its time and place. We may not know or recognize at once that it was painted by Botticelli, but we do see that it is a Renaissance painting. We see that it has been derived from, and authored by, the culture that produced it.

And yet we recognize, too, that this painting of the virgin and child is not identical to one by Raphael or Ghirlandaio or Leonardo. So, clearly, while the culture creates much of Botticelli, it is also true that Botticelli creates the culture—that he took the culture into himself and transformed it in his own unique way.

And so, whether we mean to or not, the work we do is both received and created, both an adaptation and an original, at the same time. We re-make things as we go.<sup>24</sup>

Mee's plays often combine texts from Euripides's classical plays with texts from the contemporary world in order to create a new work that speaks to the contemporary world. Remaking of this kind differs from adaptation in that it uses collage and bricolage to create something new that cites the received work, consciously and deliberately acknowledging that we all 're-make things as we go', and that these remakings reflect current events, cultures, and individuals, as well as our attitudes towards the remade materials. Examples of remaking in this volume include Cornerstone's production,<sup>25</sup> *Antigone*

<sup>22</sup> See Hunsaker, Chapter 10, this volume.

<sup>23</sup> See Erincin, Chapter 9, this volume.

<sup>24</sup> www.charlesmee.org.

<sup>25</sup> See Foley, Chapter 20, this volume.

*Falun Gong*,<sup>26</sup> *A Taste of Aloys*,<sup>27</sup> *Antigone's Emigration*,<sup>28</sup> *Eurydice's Cry*,<sup>29</sup> and the *Tiananer Antigone*.<sup>30</sup>

While an adaptation often occurs across media, a remix, as defined by Lawrence Lessig, quotes a multitude of media—including songs, dance sequences, film clips, and digital images—to create something new that comments on its sources in the same way that a critical essay does. A remix, then, is a work composed of numerous quotations, often from a variety of media. In this volume, *Antigone: Insurgency*, which used speeches delivered by George W. Bush and Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau;<sup>31</sup> *Antigone in Ramallah ... Antigone in Beirut*, a dramatic poem for three voices with sacred and other media texts;<sup>32</sup> *Once Upon a Time*, a fictional meeting between Sheherazade and Antigone;<sup>33</sup> and Cornerstone's multi-media montage commenting on the power of the media to control what is said,<sup>34</sup> provide examples of remixing.

#### THE FORCE OF PERFORMANCE

In the same way that adaptations are often judged by their 'faithfulness' to the adapted text, performances are often judged by their 'faithfulness' to the text, which turns performance into a subsidiary, derivative, entity. As W. B. Worthen points out, this conceptual framework 'reduces performance to the performance of language, words' (p. 8),<sup>35</sup> or, as another critic put it, it turns performance into 'literature that walks'. Text-based or literary approaches to theatre 'discount the force of theatre, including its potentially disruptive, "performative" force, because they understand stage performance merely as the citation of the playwright's script' (p. 9). In contrast, 'nontheatrical performances like the marriage ceremony exemplify the "performative" because, far from being determined by the text, the performance is understood to frame, contextualize, and determine the possible meanings the text can have as performed action, as an act with force' (p. 8).

Needless to say, 'dramatic performance is not determined by the text of the play: it strikes a much more interactive, performative relation between writing and the spaces, places, and behaviors that give it meaning, force, as theatrical action' (p. 12). For example, although *kutiyattam*—a particular way of perform-

<sup>26</sup> See Foley, Chapter 20, this volume.

<sup>28</sup> See Ziter, Chapter 16, this volume.

<sup>30</sup> See Chang, Chapter 7, this volume.

<sup>32</sup> See Selaïha, Chapter 19, this volume.

<sup>34</sup> See Foley, Chapter 20, this volume.

<sup>35</sup> W. B. Worthen (2003). Page references are given in the text in parentheses.

<sup>27</sup> See Selaïha, Chapter 19, this volume.

<sup>29</sup> See Erincin, Chapter 9, this volume.

<sup>31</sup> See Chang, Chapter 15, this volume.

<sup>33</sup> See Selaïha, Chapter 19, this volume.

ing Sanskrit drama in Kerala, India—uses text, the stories (from epic and mythological sources) are already familiar to the spectator, so the focus of a given performance is on the way a particular performer interprets the text by elaborating on it. The elaboration is so complex that the performance of a single play can take anywhere from five to thirty-five nights to complete. Each scene has its own title and is meant to be performed as its own entity; within each scene, a performer may spend up to an hour illuminating a single line of text by making political and social analogies, exploring emotional associations, and telling related or background stories. On the first night of a *kutiyattam* performance a character enters, introduces himself by narrating his personal history and some important details from his own life, presents some of the important events leading up to the play, and expands on details found in the first few lines of text. On the second and third nights the same character (possibly played by a different actor) tells stories connected to, but not found in, the main story of the play. On the fourth night a second character introduces himself, presents personal background leading up to the moment the play begins, and tells the story from his point of view. On each successive night other characters appear until all the characters have been introduced, each offering his or her own history and version of the story. On other nights the *vidushaka* appears. His job is to translate the Sanskrit text of the play into Malayalam (the language spoken in Kerala, where *kutiyattam* is performed) and to make political and social analogies between events in the play and events in the real world. In this way, the story is told and retold from many points of view, the background to the story is fully explored, and the story is made relevant to the audience. On the final night, 'the play' is performed. Thus 'the play'—the text sans elaborations—is only a tiny fraction of the total experience, and the *attaprakarams* (the acting manuals that contain guidelines for the improvised elaborations) are valued even more highly than the text itself. This is an example of a performance-driven (rather than a text-driven) approach to performing traditional material.

Although a few of the chapters in this volume have, out of necessity (because of the unavailability of production information or because the article is engaging with multiple examples), focused largely or solely on the texts of the adaptations and remakings, this volume as a whole differentiates itself from text-based analyses of modern productions that focus on the texts sans performance, or, when they analyse the performance, judge it in terms of its 'fidelity' either to the adapted text, or to the text of the adaptation itself. This means that, in the same way that we do not privilege the adapted text over the adaptation, we do not privilege the text over the performance, treat performance as merely a derivative citation of the text, or treat performance as 'merely a clever way to reiterate writing by other means' (p. 10). Our performance-oriented look at *Antigone* allows us, among other things, to 're-

calibrate our understanding of the relationship between texts and performances' (p. 12), to 'see dramatic performativity as a species of the "performative"—producing action with a characteristic, if ambiguous, force' (p. 10), and to see and provide for our readers 'a more vigorous sense of the consequences of theatrical behavior' (p. 10).

Our focus on performance also allows aesthetic challenges to emerge and be highlighted rather than glossed over or erased. Although we do not discuss this production in our book, Femi Osofisan's *Tegonni* provides a good example of what happens if play analysis focuses solely on the text.<sup>36</sup> In *Tegonni*, Osofisan uses elements of Yoruba storytelling to challenge the colonial privileging of text. While Osofisan's work is interesting precisely because he does not advocate a return to a mythical 'pre-colonial theatrical purity' that can be used to define 'Nigerian culture' (as others have done), he nonetheless mobilizes Yoruba songs, dances, mythology, and symbolism, along with hybrid theatrical practices, to challenge notions of colonial cultural superiority that were partly disseminated in Nigeria through theatre. To ignore these aspects of production is to reinscribe a colonial privileging of text, and to remarginalize elements of performance already marginalized by colonial culture and treated as culturally inferior. Osofisan's use of Yoruba performance, and *Tegonni*'s hybridity, is part of the play's thematic content. To ignore the performance aspects of the play is to analyse only a fraction of the play, to elide crucial aspects of the social, historical, political, and cultural dimensions of the play, and to miss critical aspects of its 'postcolonial' dimension.

Because this book deals with such a wide range of productions from such diverse contexts and traditions, it aims to contribute to conversations in disciplines such as comparative literature, classics, theatre and performance studies, and women's studies, as well as to interdisciplinary conversations about adaptation, postcolonial culture, interculturalism, hybridity, spectatorship, and reception. Reception theory developed in the 1970s out of reader-response theory, which reminds us that the meanings of a text are 'neither manifested in the printed text, nor produced solely by the reader's imagination',<sup>37</sup> but generated by a synthesis between the two. This dispels the notion that there is a single, timeless, objective, *sui generis*, independent, meaning of a text and introduces the notion of reader agency: the notion that a reader actively negotiates and interprets rather than passively receives a text. Stanley Fish subverted the authority of the text by pointing out that readers bring interpretative strategies to a text that exist 'prior to the act of reading and therefore determine the shape of what is read' rather than the other way around.<sup>38</sup> Fish and Wolfgang Iser focused on

<sup>36</sup> For articles on *Tegonni*, see Gibbs (2007), Goff and Simpson (2007a), and Chanter (2011).  
<sup>37</sup> Iser (1978: 135). <sup>38</sup> Fish (1980: 171).

responses of the individual reader, which led to the idea that there are as many readings of a text as there are readers, and consequently that all readings are subjective and therefore arbitrary. However, Hans Robert Jauss, who located the reader in history, pointed out that the reception of a text is neither arbitrary nor subjective but 'a process of directed perception' that is shaped by a 'horizon of expectations'.<sup>39</sup> The horizon of expectations is determined by a reader's cultural background, aesthetic expectations, personal experiences, class, gender, sexuality, political motivations, and the historical moment in which he or she lives. Locating the reader response in time, as a reflection of a particular historical moment, allows theorists to examine the various ways a single text has been understood over time. Classicists have used reception theory to understand the force and power of classical material in the modern world. As one of the leading reception theorists in classics notes: 'reception is and always has been a field for the practice and study of contest about values and their relationship to knowledge and power'.<sup>40</sup>

Performance theorists have used reception theory as one way of understanding spectator responses.<sup>41</sup> However, most theories of reception are reader based, and therefore have limited applicability to theatre because, as Howard Mancing points out, we *read* a book, but we *see* and *hear* a play, which are, cognitively speaking, very different processes. 'Perceiving and knowing', he writes, 'is not the same as "reading and knowing"'.<sup>42</sup> Mancing refers to reading as imaginative performance, and to theatre as perceptual performance: 'When someone sees a performance of a play, she or he has an experience much more like actually seeing reality than that person could possibly have when reading a book'.<sup>43</sup> Theatre, he writes, 'is essentially mimetic, not diegetic... while a written narrative text is essentially diegetic, not mimetic'.<sup>44</sup> Our focus on performance allows for consideration of the spectator's experience, which means we look at what the productions *do* (theatre as verb) rather than at what the dramatic literature *means* (play as noun), because productions—particularly productions of *Antigone*—are actions, not things.

#### THE FOCUS OF THIS VOLUME: WHY PERFORMANCE?

The location and context of a performance, its staging, gestures, costumes, sets, songs, dances, and interpolated texts and media, all give performance its

<sup>39</sup> Jauss (1982: 23). <sup>40</sup> Hardwick (2003: 11). See also Hall and Harrop (2010).

<sup>41</sup> See, e.g., Blau (1990), Schoenmakers (1992), and Bennett (1997).

<sup>42</sup> Mancing (2006: 191).

<sup>43</sup> Mancing (2006: 196–7).

<sup>44</sup> Mancing (2006: 194).



or experienced changes in official state ideology. However, many of the productions under discussion were first staged in the current millennium, some as recently as 2008, and many are still being performed. As such, our book is up-to-the-minute.

The productions we focus on here are important both because of what they have accomplished aesthetically and/or politically, and because of the ways in which they broaden our understanding of the wide range of impulses behind, and effects of adapting, remaking, and remixing ancient Greek tragedy. To write about these productions we approached authors who are uniquely able to situate the productions in both local and global contexts. It is worth noting that these writers come from several disciplines and bring a variety of perspectives to their analyses, so the book as a whole represents an interdisciplinary approach to these questions, which we hope will have the added benefit of engendering dialogue between the different disciplines. In several cases chapters deal primarily or solely with the text (see, for example, chapters by Van Steen, Goff and Simpson, Worthen, and Macintosh), because production information was scant, but more importantly because the author was focused on larger national or transnational issues raised by the texts themselves.<sup>89</sup> They are included here because of what both the chapters themselves and the productions they examine contribute to the overall discussion of *Antigone* in the world.

Finally, a number of these chapters begin to compensate for the paucity of writing in English on Egyptian, Syrian, Turkish, Native American, and Taiwanese theatre in general, and the reception of Greek tragedies in those theatrical traditions in particular. Theatre and performance scholars will be interested in these chapters simply because they offer information that is difficult to find in English.

Because of the number of issues addressed in each production and the thematic focus of the articles, we have grouped the articles in eight parts. We chose to group them this way because these are the thematic strands that stood out to us; but they are not the only thematic strands in either the productions or the chapters, and readers will, we are sure, find many connections between chapters in different sections.

### Part I. *Antigone* in Antiquity

We begin the book with Edith Hall's study of *Antigone* in antiquity. Sophocles put *Antigone's* previously fairly obscure story on the cultural map, and his

<sup>89</sup> Because of the number of languages we deal with here, we have chosen not to emphasize linguistic details in the translations and adaptations.

play immediately became so influential that the endings of Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes* and Euripides' *Phoenician Women* were probably revised to reflect it. In the fourth century BCE and later, Aristotle mentions the play five times, and the orator Demosthenes quotes Creon's first speech in order to attack his political rival Aeschines; famous actors such as Theodorus took the now canonical play on tour throughout the Greek world; and the tragedian Accius became the first Roman writer known to have adapted Sophocles' play. Hall argues that, while the play's representation of an insular, incestuous world reflected democratic Athens's view of its long-time enemy and neighbour, aristocratic Thebes, its depiction of leadership soon developed a pan-hellenic and international appeal among Greek states with different constitutions. Hall's chapter sets up the rest of the book by demonstrating how and why *Antigone* has always been already adapted, and has always already been a part of world theatre.

### Part II. An Ancient Greek Play?

The two chapters in this section resituate the play both temporally and geographically, demonstrating the ways in which *Antigone* has become a means of articulating the problems of modern nations. Together they prove (as does the book as a whole) that *Antigone* is a modern play—and *Antigone* a modern figure—belonging to many nations.

Moira Fradinger argues that *Antigone* is Argentina's 'national play.' *Antígona* has been appropriated 'at crucial foundational moments in which violence sealed tragic and unstable pacts of national unification and women played key roles, [and has been] summoned to build or to sacrifice for the nation or moved to resist power'. Fradinger analyses Leopoldo Marechal's 1951 *Antígona Vélez*, Alberto de Zavalía's 1959 *El Límite* (*The Limit*), Griselda Gambaro's 1986 *Antígona Furiosa*, and Jorge Huertas 2001 *Antígonas, Linaje de Hembrás* (*AntigoneS, Female Lineage*), arguing that the central question of all these productions is: 'will Argentina continue to sacrifice its women and exclude others and promulgate internal violence and terror in order to build a modern nation?'

Fiona Macintosh examines *Antigone's* popularity in Ireland, beginning with the first adaptation by Frank McGuinness in the mid-1980s, and including subsequent adaptations by Tom Paulin, Aidan Carl Matthews, Brendan Kennelly, Pat Murphy (a film version), Seamus Heaney, Conall Morrison, and Owen McCafferty. In a country where ritual lamentation and public burial are live and central traditions, *Antigone* has served as an embodiment of feminine resistance to colonial oppression and patriarchy.

Several of the chapters in this volume, but particularly these two, connect the theatrical performance of *Antigone* to Antigone-like figures such as the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, women fighting for freedom in Manipur, and the romantic figures emblematic of Irish nationalism and Irish matriarchal traditions such as Erin or the mythical Deidre, emphasizing performances of self-as-Antigone in everyday life. Thus parts of the book provide, as Jill Lane has pointed out, a way of highlighting women's political labour and a way of analysing political work and political imagination in gendered terms: an area that she rightly points out would benefit from further analysis from a performance studies/theatre studies perspective.<sup>90</sup>

### Part III. Cultural and Political Freedom

Productions of *Antigone* have been used to fight for the legitimacy and recognition of local cultures in contradistinction to hegemonic national, colonial, and/or global cultures. The chapters in this part focus on Antigone's fight for freedom of cultural expression as and when cultural expression is political.

Erin B. Mee analyses two productions of *Antigone* that have been staged recently in Manipur, a police state in north-east India, addressing the conflict between regional autonomy and national stability. They align *Antigone* with indigenous performance and local deities so that she represents pride in indigenous culture and resistance to Hinduization and Indianization. These productions have been used to articulate, celebrate, and perform regional culture, and to establish a regional identity that is distinct from, if not in opposition to, the national identity and culture imposed on Manipur's citizens by the Indian government. As such, they mount both a cultural and a political resistance to the national government.

Félix Morisseau-Leroy's *Antigòn an Kreyòl* is, as Fradinger states, 'best understood as a staging of a Haitian historical drama rather than of a European drama staged in Haiti and as a postcolonial appropriation of foreign cultural material from within the cultural and political legacy of its appropriating culture, rather than as a simple adaptation'. Morisseau-Leroy uses the Creole language and Vodou to 'rethink the drama of the Haitian revolution and modernization' in and on local terms. His conscious assertion of the legitimacy of Creole as a valid language of high culture, and one appropriate for the (re)production of a Greek classic, was a political act, as was his use of Vodou. Fradinger points out that 'the play effects a critique of modernity and national identity, contesting the meaning

<sup>90</sup> Jill Lane in an email to Erin B. Mee, 2007.

of modernity from within modernity's ideals, and not from the perspective of tradition: its recovery of Vodou, rather than a rejection of modernity, points to a recovery of the revolution's ideals'. In other words, his play is an assertion of an alternative modernity in and on Haitian terms.<sup>91</sup>

Dongshin Chang writes about a 2001 performance of *Antigone* in lyrical Taiwanese, the language used in Taiwan before Mandarin was mandated as the national language, at the historic Koxinga shrine. A masked chorus sang and danced using rhymed quatrains and the seven-word lines common in Taiwanese folklore. Drawing in part on Taiwanese rituals and practices, and substituting local gods for Greek in a number of instances, this production was one of a number of productions by the company Tainan Jen Theatre that aimed to communicate Western theatre to local audiences while at the same time enhancing the status of local traditions by putting them centre stage.

Cobina Gillitt analyses a production of *Antigone* staged in 1974 as a response to government censorship in Indonesia. Rendra, one of Indonesia's best-known cultural figures, was banned from the theatre for staging a play that featured a repressive dictator who prioritizes economic development above all else. 'At the time, open criticism of President Soeharto's "New Order" government (1966–1998) was against the law.' Rendra used *Antigone* as a way of circumventing censorship, and for this reason it is worth noting that productions of *Antigone* do more than simply use masks; they often serve as a mask behind which to hide a critique of the government and avoid censorship. Rendra's version eliminated references to Greek deities and mythical genealogies, and stressed the eternal justice of natural law as opposed to the injustice of state laws implemented by transitory rulers. Rendra used the Chinese martial art *silat* as a basis for the movement vocabulary in the production, which caused critics to interpret the production as a version of *ketoprak*, 'a rural Javanese popular operetta... that uses humour to voice the problems of the common man in order to avoid political censorship'. While the government officially banned commentary on and criticism of government leaders in modern theatre productions such as Rendra's, Gillitt tells us that the kind of political commentary in *ketoprak* 'has a long tradition of being tolerated and even expected in traditional and popular theatre forms', where 'the clown characters are free to improvise obliquely on sensitive contemporary topics mostly with impunity'. In addition, Rendra wanted to respond to the fashion for elite Western theatre by valorizing Indonesian traditional performance. Thus Rendra combined *Antigone* with traditional theatrical genres to make a series of political and aesthetic statements.

<sup>91</sup> See Mee (2009: 17–19).

In these productions directors and playwrights have used the medium of theatre itself, as well as the political legacy of *Antigone*, to address the intertwined problems of cultural and political repression, and the politics of aesthetics.

#### Part IV. *Antigone* and Human Rights

In Sophocles's play, *Antigone* publicly disobeys Creon's law, arguing that it is unjust and that she has an *obligation* to set her brother's soul to rest by burying him—thus setting up what many have viewed as a distinction between the law of the land and a higher, moral obligation. Among other things, Sophocles's *Antigone* has often been interpreted as representing the clash between morality and state law, justice and order, individual freedom and state authority, female/male roles in society, and the importance of kinship. In production, *Antigone* is often depicted as a heroine because she speaks out against injustice and takes action that topples an oppressive regime as represented by Creon. This is the case in Şahika Tekand's *Eurydice's Cry*, in *Yup'ik Antigone*, where Creon's actions threaten the whole village, and, in a more complex way, in Andrzej Wajda's 'Solidarity' production in Cracow.

Serap Erincin writes about Şahika Tekand's production *Eurydice's Cry* (2006), which commented on freedom and human rights in Turkey through a highly circumscribed movement vocabulary. The chorus's movements consisted of a small number of repeated gestures performed at precise moments in response to text, and cued by lighting. The chorus was stationary; its members were not able to move at all on their own; their movements were dictated, so to speak, by Creon. As the play went on, the chorus became increasingly affected by *Antigone's* arguments, and began to take on gestures associated with her character. Thus *Antigone's* effect on the chorus was visibly manifested through gesture. *Eurydice*, a silent character in Sophocles, finally found her voice in this production: her scream shattered the last of Creon's power. This production is ultimately triumphant: Creon is toppled by the collective movements of the chorus, and by the women who speak up.

In 1984 Dave Hunsaker and Jim Simard directed *Yup'ik Antigone* with the active collaboration of a local Yup'ik community in Toksook Bay on the Bering Sea coast in western Alaska. Hunsaker's impulse was to create a dialogue between a famous Western text and a living local tradition. The Yup'ik tell the story of 'a village headman in ancient times who, in spite of the warnings of elders and the shaman, had become overly dictatorial, his actions throwing the natural world out of balance . . . the animals shunned the hunters, and famine ensued'. When Hunsaker heard this story, he thought of Creon, while 'the ignored admonitions of the elders and shaman sounded like those of the chorus and Tiresias; *Antigone*

herself reminded me of the innocents of the village who were doomed to starvation by the actions of the tyrant'. The production focused on the effect of a tyrant's actions on innocent villagers and the dangers of ignoring the advice and wisdom of the elders, and embodied these ideas by embedding Sophocles's play in Yup'ik festal traditions and folklore.

During Poland's famous period of martial law, Andrzej Wajda directed what has come to be called the 'Solidarity' *Antigone* to make visible the tensions between power and powerlessness in the Polish social system at the time. However, Wajda did not make simple, dichotomous statements: for example, the play's chorus shifted identities, positions, and allegiances four times to represent both power and resistance. Nor did he restrict himself to Poland: the production referred to character types in the world at large through eclectic costuming (*Antigone* in a black chador, Creon dressed as a mafia don), placing his analysis of the Polish social system in a larger, global, context.

These very powerful productions provide examples of the way *Antigone* is used to challenge repressive governments and individual dictators—and, in the case of *Yup'ik Antigone*, to make a case for not throwing society out of balance.

#### Part V. Individual versus Collective

Both the play and the character have also been used to generate discussion about the individual's relationship to society.

Mae Smethurst's chapter analyses Miyagi Satoshi's *Antigone*, performed in 2004 by his Ku Na'uka Theatre Company in front of the National Museum of Art in Tokyo, which confronted the legacy of the Second World War and its aftermath in Japan. *Antigone*, supported by her fiancé Haimon, represented an intensely principled, positive, and pointedly female individual challenge to the political authority of a collective Creon, played by multiple actors, and to group identity embodied in timid, obedient citizens, represented by multiple Ismenes.

In 2003, Victor Arditto staged a never-performed 1951 adaptation of *Antigone* by Aris Alexandrou in Thessaloniki, Greece, to test the limits of political introspection by the Greek Left over its behaviour during the Nazi Occupation of Greece and the Civil War that followed, when fratricide was prevalent. In each act of the production Gonda Van Steen discusses in her chapter, *Antigone* asserts her independence from the ideology of her fellow Leftists by insisting on burying the body of a partisan sacrificed to internal disputes among the Left. In the first act she buries a wounded German deserter who had become her lover. In Act II, a Leftist commander sacrifices a fellow

partisan to the Right, and Antigone courageously buries his body. In this production Antigone again and again rejects the ideological violence inflicted on others by her group.

In these two productions Antigone is the individualist standing up for what is right in spite of pressure to conform, and it is she who enables the audience to reconsider the legacy of the national political past.

#### Part VI. Antigone as Dissident

In this part we deal with two productions of *Antigone* that challenge our assumptions about anti-social behaviour and the mechanisms we use to brand people as terrorists. These productions address the state's construction of a dissident as anti-social.

Mark Seamon writes about a 2006 production of *Antigone* at the Children's Theatre Company of Minneapolis, Minnesota, for a teenage audience of 12–18-year-olds. The production invited a critique and discussion of post-9/11 politics and the Iraq War in a space littered with cultural and political detritus, and stressed the problems of communication between parents and children and leaders and citizens as well as the need for political change. The audience was invited not only to empathize with the rebellious, anti-war Antigone's resistance to a physically powerful and sometimes violent Creon, but to participate directly in the production. Because Antigone was played by an African-American actress and Creon was played by a white actor, the production alluded to racism as a component of contemporary social problems.

Dongshin Chang writes about *Antigone: Insurgency* (2007), a response to state measures taken in the name of national security in the USA and Canada after 9/11, staged with a cast of three. The script treated Sophocles's text as a score into which modern material was interpolated. For example, Creon's first speech drew on both that of George Bush at ground zero on 14 September, and another by Canada's former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. Antigone's final list of fellow resisters included names that many would have characterized as terrorists. Yet the play ended with a vision of reconciliation: Creon holding the dead Antigone, posed like the pietà.

The deconstruction of the text in *Antigone: Insurgency* and the use of the playing space in the CTC production mirror the seeming destruction and chaos of post-9/11 society.

#### Part VII. Cultural Memory

In this section we focus on Antigones who embody a cultural history that fights to remain alive. Edward Ziter focuses on an Antigone in exile in order to highlight the political erasure of resistance and the analogous erasure of the memory of homeland from those who resist. Martina Treu analyses a site-specific production of *Antigone* in a mountain cemetery, where German Second World War soldiers are buried, in order to look at what nations choose to remember, and what they try to forget. Barbara Goff and Michael Simpson, noting that history is always written by those in power, use Sylvain Bemba's *Black Wedding Candles for Blessed Antigone* to argue that Antigone can insert herself into history in order to rescript it, and in order to enact new histories.

The well-known Syrian star of film and television, Jihad Saad, staged *Antigone's Emigration* in 2006 to a packed audience at the Damascus International Theatre Festival. 'The play—which literally depicts a woman persecuted and forced into flight by war between two brothers—was performed in a city reeling from an influx of Iraqi refugees as the result of violence between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims.' Using the line 'who has no homeland has no grave in the earth', Edward Ziter focuses on the way the production depicted 'authority's violent displacement of its opponents, systematically erasing any memory of resistance from the homeland and any memory of the homeland from those who resist'. He argues that 'the production implicitly transforms *Antigone* into a searing analysis of violence in the Arab world and its effects on women.'

In 2006 two Italian directors, Gianluca Guidotti and Enrica Sangiovanni, staged *Antigone* at a German Military Cemetery in the Apennine Mountains between Florence and Bologna. This isolated cemetery rests on the 'Gothic line' built by the Nazis in 1943 to protect northern Italy and Germany from an anticipated allied attack from the south, and it became the site of bloody trench warfare in 1944–5 in which thousands of young Germans died and were buried, most anonymously. The production took the audience through various sites in the cemetery, and involved local inhabitants, who also served as chorus members. The text included interpolations by Bertolt Brecht and the Italian poet Cesare Pavese, whose words captured the play's central theme: 'Every War is a Civil War, every fallen man resembles those who remain alive and calls them to account.'

Barbara Goff and Michael Simpson analyse Sylvain Bemba's 1988 play *Noes Posthumes de Santigone* (*Black Wedding Candles for Blessed Antigone*). They argue that



Bemba's play dramatizes [the] fragility of communication within two cultural traditions, of which one is identified with the African Griot, while the other is associated with Sophocles's *Antigone*. Figuring both traditions as punctuated, and punctured, by gaps, *Santigone* juxtaposes them with a specifically political history that creates such oblivion, sometimes of itself, and always for its own convenience... By thus invoking and reconstructing two cultural traditions from precisely contrary materials... the play emerges as a cultural critique of such political history, particularly the period in Burkina Faso after 1987.

However, they point out that

there is also some redemption in this theatrical conjuring, as the gaps within each cultural tradition, African and Greek, partly address those in the other, and, by that means, interpellate the silent absences of political history. If roles of resistance within cultural history, such as Antigone's, can be recollected, accumulated, and vocalized sufficiently, political history might be opened, rescripted, and enacted so that it does not describe a closed circle of violent inertia and oblivion.

Goff and Simpson demonstrate how, in multiple ways, the play's characters resist both the political erasure of cultural memory and the fragility of intercultural communication.

#### Part VIII. Sophocles versus Anouilh

What happens when directors choose Anouilh instead of Sophocles as their source? Do they choose Anouilh because they begin with the desire to present a more 'balanced' debate or to make Creon a more complex character? Does the choice of version lead them to a certain kind of production? The chapters in this section analyse productions that either adapt and remake Anouilh's play or choose Sophocles for a different set of reasons than those previously discussed, and thus question the kinds of political statements that one can and cannot make using Sophocles and Anouilh.

In reviewing numerous Egyptian remakings of *Antigone*, Nehad Selaiha suggests that people have adapted Sophocles's play during times of irreconcilable ideological differences and political repression. In 1965, a production of Sophocles's *Antigone* in Brecht's epic style voiced a vehement protest against Nasser's autocratic, tyrannical rule. In 1978, a production of Anouilh's version offered an implicit response to Sadat's compromises with Israel and its allies, culminating in the Camp David agreement. Anouilh's more sympathetic Creon was used to reflect Sadat's attempt to make the best of bad options against growing internal opposition from Islamic movements. A 2002 performance in English at the American University in Cairo, directed by Frank

Bradley, set the play in modern Palestine in the rubble of a war-ravaged city. *Antigone in Ramallah... Antigone in Beirut*, a dramatic poem for three voices, interpolated sacred and other media texts into the plot; the Antigone figure embodied a call for peace and reconciliation in a context that reflected the conflicts and tensions in the region past and present. In 2003, *Once Upon a Time* staged a fictional meeting between Scheherazade of *The Arabian Nights* and Antigone, in which it was suggested that, in the context of a patriarchal culture, whether a woman succumbs to the dictates of the status quo or opts for opposition, she is doomed. Finally, in 2008, Azza El-Husseini's *Ta'am Al-Sabbar (A Taste of Aloes)*, set in the rural Egyptian south, drew on local folk and ritual traditions to express a contemporary pessimism that Egypt was unable to stand up to tyranny.

Helene Foley explores two new remakings of Anouilh's *Antigone* in order to examine the current US attraction to Anouilh as a vehicle for exploring irreconcilable social and political tensions. Both Cornerstone Theatre's *An Antigone Story: A Greek Tragedy Hijack*, which took place in Los Angeles before and during the Democratic National Convention in 2000, and *Antigone Falun Gong*, in which the heroine defied government orders to practise Falun Gong in a contemporary Chinese city park to protest the killing of her (probably) interned brother, undermine the positions taken by both major characters. In *An Antigone Story*, Antigone cannot make her gesture meaningful in a dystopian American future dominated by media and corporations, and *Antigone Falun Gong's* A is faced with a world in which individual gestures, perhaps necessarily, sustain little meaning.

Lorna Hardwick focuses on a Georgian production of Anouilh's *Antigone* presented at the Edinburgh festival, analysing 'what happens when traditions intersect at moments of national and political crisis'. The confrontation between an extraordinarily compelling Creon and a near-terrorist Antigone implicated its audience in adjusting and questioning their own European lens on the performance.

Finally, Hana Worthen examines the only post-war Finnish production of Sophocles's play at the National Theatre in Helsinki, which was a deliberate attempt to stage a conservative, 'humanistic' production that 'captured the ideology of a Western leaning democracy on the border of the Soviet Union' as well as to repress memories of the Finnish alliance with Germany's third Reich during the Second World War. The production's effort to maintain an 'apolitical' and 'universalizing' humanism and neutrality was undermined by the modernist set designs of Josef Svoboda, and by the production's failure to suppress the association between humanism and racial discrimination in Finland during the Second World War. Left-wing reviewers also insisted on rejecting neutrality as an option for any production of *Antigone*.