

Competing Narratives:  
A Narratological Approach to Sophocles' *Antigone*  
Adriana Brook, Lawrence University



Ismene and Antigone, Wilma Theater, 2015

# Narratology and Drama

- “I needed to insist on the truly insurmountable opposition between dramatic representation and narrative.”
  - Genette 1988 [1983], *Narrative Discourse Revisited*
- “It is therefore simply not necessary to turn to narratology when discussing drama texts. Indeed, applying narratology to drama dilutes the specificity of narratology and stretches its concepts to such a degree that they become meaningless; every character on stage becomes a narrator and a focalizer.”
  - De Jong 2004, *Narrators, Narratees, and Narratives*

- “For ‘the story’ does not tell itself: there is certainly someone actively shaping the events.” (Gould 2001)
- “Narratology, as a formal practice, does not claim to uncover new meanings in a literary work, but rather describes more clearly how the work produces its effects.” (Dunn 2009)

# Sophocles' *Antigone*:

- Pious freedom fighter defies draconian dictator-state, unflinchingly giving her life in order to bury her brother and defend the sanctity of the family

# Sophocles' *Antigone*:

- Unwavering champion of the city foils duplicitous schemes and guerrilla tactics of traitor seeking to aid Thebes' enemies

# Sophocles' *Antigone*





# Sophocles' *Antigone*



# Sophocles' *Antigone*





# Sophocles' *Antigone*

- In the wake of horrific family tragedy, two people with good intentions prove incapable of compromise, causing terrible suffering.

Why do many instinctively have the following experience of the story told in the *Antigone*?:

1. At first, many are inclined to accept Antigone's version over Creon's.
2. Over time, many come to accept that neither version is fully correct (cf. Hegel).

# *Antigone*

Prologue (1-99)

Parodos (100-161)

Episode 1 (162-331)

First Choral Ode (332-383)

Episode 2 (384-581)

Second Choral Ode (582-630)

Episode 3 (631-780)

Third Choral Ode (781-805)

Episode 4 (806-943)

Fourth Choral Ode (944-987)

Episode 5 (988-1114)

Fifth Choral Ode = Hyporchema (1115-1154)

Exodos (1155-1352)

**PROLOGUE**

Antigone

Ismene

**PARODOS**

**EPISODE 1**

Creon

Guard

**FIRST CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 2**

Guard

Creon

**SECOND CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 3**

Creon

Creon

**THIRD CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 4**

Antigone

Antigone

**FOURTH CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 5**

Teiresias

Creon

**FIFTH CHORAL ODE = HYPORCHEMA**

**EXODOS**

Messenger

Chorus

**PROLOGUE**

Antigone

Ismene

**PARODOS**

**EPISODE 1**

Creon

Guard

**FIRST CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 2**

Guard

Creon

**SECOND CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 3**

Creon

Creon

**THIRD CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 4**

Antigone

Antigone

**FOURTH CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 5**

Teiresias

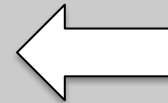
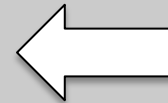
Creon

**FIFTH CHORAL ODE = HYPORCHEMA**

**EXODOS**

Messenger

Chorus



**PROLOGUE**

Antigone

Ismene

**PARODOS**

**EPISODE 1**

Creon

Guard

**FIRST CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 2**

Guard

Creon

**SECOND CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 3**

Creon

Creon

**THIRD CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 4**

Antigone

Antigone

**FOURTH CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 5**

Teiresias

Creon

**FIFTH CHORAL ODE = HYPORCHEMA**

**EXODOS**

Messenger

Chorus





**PROLOGUE**

Antigone

Ismene

**PARODOS**

**EPISODE 1**

Creon

Guard

**FIRST CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 2**

Guard

Creon

**SECOND CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 3**

Creon



Creon

**THIRD CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 4**

Antigone

Antigone

**FOURTH CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 5**

Teiresias

Creon

**FIFTH CHORAL ODE = HYPORCHEMA**

**EXODOS**

Messenger

Chorus

**PROLOGUE**

Antigone

Ismene

**PARODOS**

**EPISODE 1**

Creon

Guard

**FIRST CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 2**

Guard

Creon

**SECOND CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 3**

Creon

Creon

**THIRD CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 4**

Antigone

Antigone

**FOURTH CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 5**

Teiresias

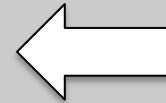
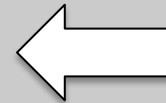
Creon

**FIFTH CHORAL ODE = HYPORCHEMA**

**EXODOS**

Messenger

Chorus



**PROLOGUE**

Antigone

Ismene

**PARODOS**

**EPISODE 1**

Creon

Guard

**FIRST CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 2**

Guard

Creon

**SECOND CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 3**

Creon

Creon

**THIRD CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 4**

Antigone

Antigone

**FOURTH CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 5**

Teiresias

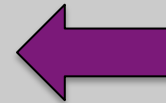
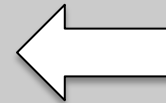
Creon

**FIFTH CHORAL ODE = HYPORCHEMA**

**EXODOS**

Messenger

Chorus



**PROLOGUE**

Antigone

Ismene

*Well, if you wish to, go! But know this much, that in your going you are foolish, but truly dear to those who are your own.*

**PARODOS**

**EPISODE 1**

Creon

Guard

**FIRST CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 2**

Guard

Creon

**SECOND CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 3**

Creon

Creon

**THIRD CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 4**

Antigone

Antigone

**FOURTH CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 5**

Teiresias

Creon

**FIFTH CHORAL ODE = HYPORCHEMA**

**EXODOS**

Messenger

Chorus

**PROLOGUE**

Antigone

Ismene

**PARODOS**

**EPISODE 1**

Creon

*I hold the power and the throne by reason of my kinship with the dead*

Guard

**FIRST CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 2**

Guard

Creon

**SECOND CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 3**

Creon

Creon

**THIRD CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 4**

Antigone

Antigone

**FOURTH CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 5**

Teiresias

Creon

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**EXODOS**

Messenger

Chorus

**PROLOGUE**

Antigone

Ismene

**PARODOS**

**EPISODE 1**

Creon

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Guard



**FIRST CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 2**

Guard

Creon



**SECOND CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 3**

Creon

Creon

**THIRD CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 4**

Antigone

Antigone

**FOURTH CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 5**

Teiresias

Creon

**FIFTH CHORAL ODE = HYPORCHEMA**

**EXODOS**

Messenger

Chorus



## Second Choral Ode (“Ode to Man”)

- When he applies the laws of the earth (Creon) and the justice the gods have sworn to uphold (Antigone) he is high in the city; outcast from the city is he with whom the ignoble consorts because of his recklessness (both characters).

**PROLOGUE**

Antigone

Ismene

**PARODOS**

**EPISODE 1**

Creon

Guard

**FIRST CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 2**

Guard

Creon

**SECOND CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 3**

Creon

Creon

**THIRD CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 4**

Antigone

Antigone

**FOURTH CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 5**

Teiresias

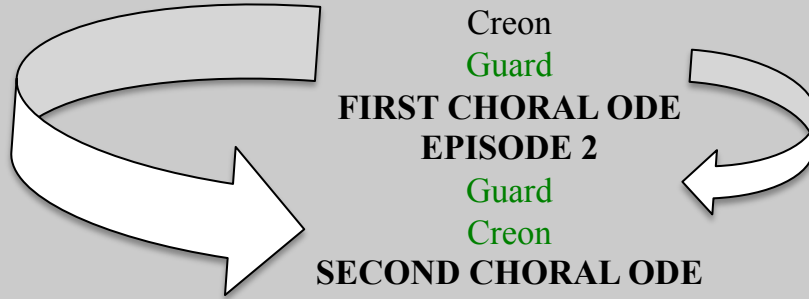
Creon

**FIFTH CHORAL ODE = HYPORCHEMA**

**EXODOS**

Messenger

Chorus



**PROLOGUE**

Antigone

Ismene

**PARODOS**

**EPISODE 1**

Creon

Guard

**FIRST CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 2**

Guard

*For to have escaped oneself from trouble is most pleasant, but to bring friends into danger is painful. But all this matters less to me than my own safety!*

Creon

**SECOND CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 3**

Creon

Creon

**THIRD CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 4**

Antigone

Antigone

**FOURTH CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 5**

Teiresias

Creon

**FIFTH CHORAL ODE = HYPORCHEMA**

**EXODOS**

Messenger

Chorus

**PROLOGUE**

Antigone

Ismene

**PARODOS**

**EPISODE 1**

Creon

Guard

**FIRST CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 2**

Guard

Creon

**SECOND CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 3**

Creon

Creon

**THIRD CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 4**

Antigone

Antigone

**FOURTH CHORAL ODE**

**EPISODE 5**

Teiresias

Creon

**FIFTH CHORAL ODE = HYPORCHEMA**

**EXODOS**

Messenger

Chorus

# *Trachiniae*

PROLOGUE

Deianeira

Deianeira

PARODOS

EPISODE 1

Deianeira

Deianeira

FIRST CHORAL ODE

EPISODE 2

Deianeira

Deianeira

SECOND CHORAL ODE

EPISODE 3

Deianeira

Hyllus

THIRD CHORAL ODE

EPISODE 4

Nurse

Nurse

FOURTH CHORAL ODE

EXODOS

Hyllus

Chorus (or Hyllus?)

## *Antigone*

### PROLOGUE

Antigone

Ismene

### PARODOS

### EPISODE 1

Creon

Guard

### FIRST CHORAL ODE

### EPISODE 2

Guard

Creon

### SECOND CHORAL ODE

### EPISODE 3

Creon

Creon

### THIRD CHORAL ODE

### EPISODE 4

Antigone

Antigone

### FOURTH CHORAL ODE

### EPISODE 5

Teiresias

Creon

### FIFTH CHORAL ODE = HYPORCHEMA

### EXODOS

Messenger

Chorus

## *Oedipus Tyrannus*

### PROLOGUE

Oedipus

Priest

### PARODOS

### EPISODE 1

Oedipus

Teiresias

### FIRST CHORAL ODE

### EPISODE 2

Creon

Jocasta

### SECOND CHORAL ODE

### EPISODE 3

Jocasta

Oedipus

### THIRD CHORAL ODE

### EPISODE 4

Oedipus

Oedipus

### FOURTH CHORAL ODE

### EXODOS

Messenger

Chorus

## *Oedipus at Colonus*

### PROLOGUE

Oedipus

Oedipus

### PARODOS

### EPISODE 1

Chorus

Theseus

### FIRST CHORAL ODE

### EPISODE 2

Antigone

Oedipus

### SECOND CHORAL ODE

### EPISODE 3

Chorus

Theseus

### THIRD CHORAL ODE

### EPISODE 4

Antigone

Oedipus

### FOURTH CHORAL ODE

### EXODOS

Messenger

Chorus



# First and Last *Exodos* Speakers

- *Antigone, Oedipus Tyrannus, Oedipus at Colonus*
  - Messenger → Chorus
- *Ajax*
  - Teucer → Chorus
- *Electra*
  - Electra → Chorus
- *Trachiniae*
  - Hyllus → Chorus (or Hyllus)
- *Philoctetes*
  - Odysseus → Chorus

Zeitlin, F. (1990) "Playing the Other: Theater, Theatricality, and the Feminine in Greek Drama" in *Nothing to Do with Dionysus: Athenian Drama in Its Social Context*. eds. J. Winkler and F. Zeitlin. Princeton: 63-96.

## PROLOGUE

Antigone

Ismene

## PARODOS

### EPISODE 1

Creon

Guard

### FIRST CHORAL ODE

### EPISODE 2

Guard

Creon

### SECOND CHORAL ODE

### EPISODE 3

Creon

Creon

### THIRD CHORAL ODE

### EPISODE 4

Antigone

Antigone

### FOURTH CHORAL ODE

### EPISODE 5

Teiresias

Creon

### FIFTH CHORAL ODE =

### HYPORCHEMA

### EXODOS

Messenger

Chorus

- ~~Pious freedom fighter defies draconian dictator state, unflinchingly giving her life in order to bury brother and defend the sanctity of the family~~
- ~~Unwavering champion of the city foils duplicitous schemes and guerrilla tactics of traitor seeking to aid Thebes' enemies~~
- In the wake of horrific family tragedy, two people with good intentions prove incapable of compromise, causing terrible suffering.

## What is the Story of the *Antigone*?

- Polyneices and Eteocles kill each other in battle
- Creon pronounces an edict forbidding the burial of Polyneices
- [Antigone] buries Polyneices
- Creon has Polyneices unburied
- Antigone buries the body again
- The Guard captures Antigone and brings her before Creon
- Haemon tries and fails to dissuade his father
- Creon has Antigone entombed in a cave
- Teiresias succeeds in dissuading Creon
- Creon buries Polyneices
- ~Antigone commits suicide~
- Haemon attempts to kill his father then commits suicide
- Eurydice commits suicide

**Polyneices and Eteocles kill each other in battle**

ISMENE/CREON

**Creon pronounces an edict forbidding the burial of Polyneices**

ANTIGONE/TIRESIAS

**[Antigone] buries Polyneices**

ANTIGONE(anticipates)/ANTIGONE

**Creon has Polyneices unburied**

GUARD

**Antigone buries the body again**

GUARD/ANTIGONE

**The Guard captures Antigone and brings her before Creon**

GUARD

**Haemon tries and fails to dissuade his father**

ONSTAGE

**Creon has Antigone entombed in a cave**

CREON(anticipates)/CREON

**Teiresias succeeds in dissuading Creon**

ONSTAGE

**Creon buries Polyneices**

CHORUS and CREON (anticipate)/MESSENGER

**~Antigone commits suicide~**

MESSENGER/MESSENGER

**Haemon attempts to kill his father then commits suicide**

(Haemon anticipates) MESSENGER/MESSENGER

**Eurydice commits suicide**

MESSENGER/MESSENGER

**Polyneices and Eteocles kill each other in battle**

ISMENE/CREON

**Creon pronounces an edict forbidding the burial of Polyneices**

ANTIGONE/TIRESIAS

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ANTIGONE(anticipates)/ANTIGONE

**Creon has Polyneices unburied**

GUARD

**Antigone buries the body again**

GUARD/ANTIGONE

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GUARD

**Haemon tries and fails to dissuade his father**

ONSTAGE

**Creon has Antigone entombed in a cave**

CREON(anticipates)/CREON

**Teiresias succeeds in dissuading Creon**

ONSTAGE

**Creon buries Polyneices**

CHORUS and CREON (anticipate)/MESSENGER

~Antigone commits suicide~

MESSENGER/MESSENGER

**Haemon attempts to kill his father then commits suicide**

(Haemon anticipates) MESSENGER/MESSENGER

**Eurydice commits suicide**

MESSENGER/MESSENGER

**PROLOGUE**  
Antigone  
Ismene  
**PARODOS**  
**EPISODE 1**  
Creon  
Guard  
**FIRST CHORAL ODE**  
**EPISODE 2**  
Guard  
Creon  
**SECOND CHORAL ODE**  
**EPISODE 3**  
Creon  
Creon  
**THIRD CHORAL ODE**  
**EPISODE 4**  
Antigone  
Antigone  
**FOURTH CHORAL ODE**  
**EPISODE 5**  
Teiresias  
Creon  
**FIFTH CHORAL ODE = HYPORCHEMA**  
**EXODOS**  
Messenger  
Chorus

Polyneices and Eteocles kill each other in battle  
Ismene/Creon  
Creon pronounces an edict forbidding the burial of  
Polyneices  
Antigone/Teiresias  
[Antigone] buries Polyneices  
Antigone (anticipates)/Antigone  
Creon has Polyneices unburied  
Guard  
Antigone buries the body again  
Guard/Antigone  
The Guard captures Antigone and brings her before Creon  
Guard  
Haemon tries and fails to dissuade his father  
Onstage  
Creon has Antigone entombed in a cave  
Creon (anticipates)/Creon  
Teiresias succeeds in dissuading Creon  
Onstage  
Creon buries Polyneices  
Chorus and Creon (anticipate)/Messenger  
~Antigone commits suicide~  
Messenger/Messenger  
Haemon attempts to kill his father then commits suicide  
(Haemon anticipates) Messenger/Messenger  
Eurydice commits suicide  
Messenger/Messenger

*Antigone*

PROLOGUE  
Antigone  
Ismene  
PARODOS  
EPISODE 1  
Creon  
Guard  
FIRST CHORAL ODE  
EPISODE 2  
Guard  
Creon  
SECOND CHORAL ODE  
EPISODE 3  
Creon  
Creon  
THIRD CHORAL ODE  
EPISODE 4  
Antigone  
Antigone  
FOURTH CHORAL ODE  
EPISODE 5  
Teiresias  
Creon  
FIFTH CHORAL ODE =  
HYPORCHEMA  
EXODOS  
Messenger  
Chorus

*Ajax*

PROLOGUE  
Athena  
Athena  
PARODOS  
EPISODE 1  
Tecmessa  
Ajax  
FIRST CHORAL ODE  
EPISODE 2  
Ajax  
Ajax  
SECOND CHORAL ODE  
EPISODE 3  
Messenger  
Ajax  
EPIPARODOS  
Chorus  
Tecmessa  
EPISODE 4  
Teucer  
Teucer  
FOURTH CHORAL ODE  
EXODOS  
Teucer  
Chorus

*Trachiniae*

PROLOGUE  
Deianeira  
Deianeira  
PARODOS  
EPISODE 1  
Deianeira  
Deianeira  
FIRST CHORAL ODE  
EPISODE 2  
Deianeira  
Deianeira  
SECOND CHORAL ODE  
EPISODE 3  
Deianeira  
Hvllus  
THIRD CHORAL ODE  
EPISODE 4  
Nurse  
Nurse  
FOURTH CHORAL ODE  
EXODOS  
Hvllus  
Chorus (or Hvllus?)

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