George Steiner, Antigones (1984; rpt New Haven: Yale UP, 1996)

Canto LXXXI, 'it is not man | Made courage, or made order, or made grace', a Canto which is Sophoclean to the heart, Heidegger renders ἐδιδάξατο (line 356) not as 'invented', but as 'found his way towards'. Language, understanding, passion are older and greater than man. They 'speak, they think *him*' (a cardinal Heideggerian principle). But in so far as he is the locus of their being, violence of deed and violence of speech are indissolubly a part of his existence. And it is this pressure of violence on all human creativity and conception which justifies the description of man as **δεινότερον**. 'The *violent one*, the creative man, who sets forth into the un-said, who breaks into the un-thought, compels the un-happened to happen, and makes the un-seen appear'—this uncanny, will-driven being stands always in peril of ἄτη, of furious error. In him, pre-eminently, 'the centre cannot hold'.

To show the full Sophoclean treatment of this antinomy, Heidegger undertakes a third reading of the ode. He now formulates his hermeneutic method: 'The actual interpretation must show what does not stand in the words and is nevertheless said.'

Man's disasters, foreshadowed in the ode, demonstrated in Sophoclean tragedy, result from an inevitable, ontological collision. The 'violence against the preponderant power of Being' by which man asserts his essence *must* shatter. Man is 'hurled into affliction', but this projection stems immediately from the entrance of man into the historicity, into the existential actualities of his 'being-there'. The hearth, the familiar, the homecoming, which are incomparably inferred in this second stasimon, are there, says Heidegger, so that 'they may be broken out of, and so that which is overpowering may break into them'. To man, 'disaster is the deepest affirmation of the overpowering'. Heidegger's conclusion leaves open the paradoxical immensities of the tragic: 'We shall fail to understand the mysteriousness of the essence of being-human, thus experienced and carried back poetically to its foundations, if we snatch at value-judgements.' Each time we encounter, to the utmost of our awareness, the πολλὰ τὰ δεινά chorus, the 'mysteriousness of the essence of our being-human' is made deeper and clearer.

Heidegger's idiom, the tidal strategy of his readings, are singularly his own. Here 'strangeness' speaks to 'strangeness' in

a vein as dramatic, as poetically re-creative as any in the entire Antigone tradition. Yet the spirit of interpretation is not far removed from that of one of the most 'classic' of readers, E. R. Dodds:

> It was above all Sophocles, the last great exponent of the archaic world-view, who expressed the full tragic significance of the old religious themes in their unsoftened, unmoralized forms—the overwhelming sense of human helplessness in face of the divine mystery, and of the *ate* that waits on all human achievement—and who made these thoughts part of the cultural inheritance of Western Man.[1]

6

The fascination of 'Antigone', the pressure which the myth has exercised on poetics and politics, are inseparable from the presence of Creon. Antigone herself is, in fact, absent from much of Sophocles' play. After her exit into night, the drama is Creon's. Pondering the dual or 'broken-backed' architecture of Sophocles' dramaturgy, commentators have repeatedly suggested that 'Antigone and Creon' would be a more just title. In the elaborations of and variations on the theme after Sophocles, the role of Creon has been as densely argued as that of the heroine. The intimacies of conflict have knit and delineated their identities.

The provenance of Creon, his formal and structural functions in the Theban cycle, are of utmost obscurity. A focus, possibly very ancient, may reside in rivalries between Lacedaemonia and Thebes. Creon would be a man of war who had seized power in the city of Cadmus, an outsider seeking legitimacy. A scholiast on Euripides' *Phoenician Women* knows of Creon as a shadowy predecessor of luminous Oedipus, as a ruler over Thebes who has lost his own son, Haemon, to the devouring Sphinx, and who has proved himself unable to free his subjects from the visitations and exactions of the monster. But even at the outset, parallels between Creon and Oedipus make themselves insistent. Oedipus' denunciation of Creon and Teiresias exactly foreshadows Creon's attack on the seer. Both rulers turn in fury on their sons. Both are led by imperious, wilful rationality into unreason and self-destruction.

[1] E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (University of California Press, 1951), 49.

The obscurities and suggestions of structural reiteration, however, do not lie solely in the mythical background and in our loss of the epic material.

The appearances of Creon in Greek tragedies, extant and fragmentary, are multiple. It is not, at all points, possible to reconcile the differing versions of his persona. We cannot tell whether Creon, as referred to in Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes* (line 474), is or is not related to Laius and Oedipus. Creon is by no means identical in Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, where he plays a part of true innocence and nobility, and in *Oedipus at Colonus* and *Antigone*. Almost nothing can be said with any certainty as to Euripides' *Antigone*, though one tradition at least depicts Creon, under the influence of a *deus ex machina*, forgiving Haemon and Antigone and recognizing their child as a legitimate heir.[1] In the *Phoenician Women*, a play which is, together with Statius' epic, the main source for 'Creons' from the late Middle Ages on, the personage becomes intricate almost to the point of self-contradiction.

Here Creon is, as we would expect, Eteocles' maternal uncle. He is also counsellor and strategist to the doomed prince. It is he who suggests, for the defence of the imperilled city, the device of the seven champions at the seven gates. Eteocles is possessed by precise intimations of fatality. Should he perish, it is Creon who must gather the reins of power. It is he who must guard his royal sister Jocasta, and who must assure the marriage of Haemon to Antigone. As to Oedipus, blind and raging behind the walls of the palace, 'it may be that his maledictions will destroy us all'. Thereupon comes a key touch, which may point to Euripides' wish to challenge, contrastively, the Sophoclean version: it is Eteocles who orders Creon to deny burial to Polyneices. If the latter falls in battle, let him never find sepulchre in Theban earth. 'And be it a friend—let whoever inters him suffer death'—where the term for 'friend' is φίλων, with all its resonances out of Sophocles' *Antigone*. After which, Creon is dismissed.

But hideous irony awaits him. He has summoned Teiresias to learn from him how best the city may be saved. The prophet enters with Menoeceus, Creon's other son. It is he who must be sacrificed if Thebes is to withstand the Argive onslaught. Haemon is affianced to Antigone; therefore, he lacks the virginal apartness required of a sacrificial victim. It is Menoeceus, 'the young stallion', who must die. 'Choose between two destinies: to save either your son or the city' (παῖδα and πόλιν are set at merciless odds in the construction and rhythm of the line). The intimations, at this juncture, may be among the most archaic in Greek drama. Ares, god of war, must be propitiated. He has not forgiven Cadmus, who slew the primeval, earth-bound dragon, out of which slaying sprang armed Thebes. Blood calls for blood. The 'golden-helmeted' warriors, Creon's kin, were born of the teeth of the dragon. Now let there be restitution. (Does the designation of Menoeceus as 'a young stallion' point to some indistinct remembrance of the sacrifice of horses, sacred to Ares?)

Creon's reaction is one of outraged humanity and paternity. 'Let no man come to glorify me (εὐλογείτω) by slaying my children.' This Euripidean line is a concentrated but total repudiation of the characterization of Creon in Sophocles' *Antigone*. It denies that characterization categorically. Creon goes further: he declares himself ready and willing to die in his son's place. He is father first, and heroic statesman second. He bids Menoeceus flee from the accursed city. The boy feigns agreement. But when Creon goes to battle, Menoeceus tells the chorus that he is resolved to save Thebes at the price of his own life. With almost ironic terseness, the Messenger, intent upon chronicling the totemic savagery of the duels at the seven gates, reports Menoeceus' suicide, high on the battlements. Creon will suffer. But what is such proud pain compared to victory and the salvation of the πόλις?

Euripides' melodrama grows ever more turbulent. Eteocles and Polyneices perish at each other's crazed hands. Aged Oedipus stumbles out of the literal past, out of the haunted discretion of his enforced retreat. His curses have borne unspeakable fruit. He and Antigone intone their lament. Creon enters and cuts them short. He is now master in the stricken polity. Eteocles has bestowed on him the legacy of power. Polyneices is to be left unburied outside the borders of Theban territory (precisely the proscription we have seen applied to banished traitors in Attic law and usage). Antigone is to marry Haemon and ensure dynastic continuity. Oedipus

[1] For a discussion of this lost *Antigone*, cf. T. B. L. Webster, *The Tragedies of Euripides* (London, 1967), 181–4. The publication of the Oxyrhynchus papyrus may have rendered Webster's speculative account untenable.

must from hence. Teiresias has made clear that Thebes can never prosper so long as it houses this polluted 'outsider'. 'I do not say this out of insolence or enmity.' Thebes has known too much horror since Oedipus' hidden birth and homecoming. With Oedipus' departure, opines Creon, the ancient anathema may, at last, be lifted. Antigone interposes, and the dialogue which ensues (there may be corruptions in our text) differs instructively from that in Sophocles.

The polemic is muted. Euripides' tone and cadence suggest utter weariness. The protagonists are at the limits of mental and nervous endurance. Creon, in whose very name we hear the root of 'power', comes near to negotiating. The interdict on Polyneices' bestowal is not his, but Eteocles'. It is plain piety and good sense to respect such an injunction. Creon orders his guards to seize the mutinous child of Oedipus. But when she takes her stand, defiantly, beside her slain brothers, Creon solicits: 'Child, daughter, higher agencies oppose you.' She, in turn, moderates her demands. It will be solace enough if she is permitted to cleanse Polyneices' corpse, if she can bind up its terrible wounds, if she is simply granted a farewell kiss. And when Antigone proclaims that she must accompany Oedipus into exile, that she will slay Haemon if forcibly wed, Creon responds by one of the most tautly controlled, equitable verses in the play: he observes that Antigone's lofty impulses are not untouched by folly, by destructive obsession (μωρία). Having said this, Creon simply tells Antigone to leave the land of Thebes.

The epilogue is marked by uncertainties and, possibly, lacunae in our text. Line 1744 seems to imply that, after Creon's exit, guards have come to remove and cast out Polyneices' remains. Antigone repeats her resolve to give burial to her disgraced brother. But if this resolve is to be fulfilled beyond Theban bounds, there is no necessary challenge to Creon. This equivocation is suggestive of Euripides' fluid treatment of the myth. The only certain note is that of exhaustion.

We know little of the *Antigone* of Astydamas which, together with two other, thematically unrelated dramas, won a first prize for its author in 342–1 BC.[1] Clearly, the work was

[1] Cf. the discussion of Astydamas' play in G. Xanthakis-Karamanos, *Studies in Fourth-Century Tragedy* (Athens, 1980), 48–53.

influenced by Euripides. Indeed, it may be the case that Hyginus, to whose plot summary I have already referred, is recounting the Euripidean version and not that of Astydamas at all. As he tells it, the drama went as follows. Antigone has interred Polyneices. Creon orders Haemon to kill her. Haemon conceals his bride among shepherds (a structural counterpart to the fate of Oedipus). Haemon informs his father that his orders have been carried out. But many years later, Maion, whom the hidden Antigone has borne to Haemon, returns to compete in Theban festive games. Creon recognizes the boy (how?) and commands the execution of both Haemon and Antigone. Heracles, with whose adventures and cults the figure of Creon may, at its opaque origins, have been associated, intervenes and brings about reconciliation. So, at least, conclude scholars familiar with the rights of divine interposition in Greek drama. Hyginus, however, says that Haemon slew his beloved Antigone, and then himself. The role of Creon is that of a murderous despot.

It would appear to have been via Lucius Accius' adaptation of Sophocles, in the second century BC, that Virgil knows of Antigone. Later antiquity, Alexandria and Byzantium in particular, turns more often to the *Phoenician Women*. From Seneca onward, epic or rhetorical–dramatic variants on the Theban cycle, such as in the twelfth-century *Roman de Thèbes*, in Boccaccio's *Teseida*, and its two English imitations, Chaucer's 'Knight's Tale' and Lydgate's 'The Story of Thebes', contain distant elements of Sophocles, but derive primarily from the *Phoenician Women* and from the uses of and ornamentations on Euripides in Statius. The pluralities of tone and value in Creon, as Euripides and Statius picture him, the uneasy amalgam of military prowess, statecraft, ambitious intrigue, weakness, and exemplary ruin, allowed the imagination liberties.

In Statius, Creon urges Eteocles on to his fratricidal duel with Polyneices because he is himself maddened by the self-sacrifice of his son. In Racine, as we have seen, Creon becomes suitor to his bereaved niece. It is in the cause of his explicit humanitarianism, and even stoic 'republicanism', that Alfieri makes of Creon the very type of the tyrant. Creon's actions are not even a reasoned apologia for *raison d'état*; they spring from the unbridled will of a megalomaniac. The departure from this

view, the revaluation of Creon, with its implicit return to orders of complexity present in ancient myth and in Sophocles' version, pivot, naturally, on the Hegelian analysis, and on the extensive debates to which this analysis gave rise. There is, unquestionably, a Creon after Hegel. Already the celebrated Tieck–Mendelssohn staging of *Antigone* presents Creon as a noble, tragically constrained, defender of the law. A long rehabilitation or, more precisely, a closer questioning had begun.

This questioning engages philologists and critics, political theorists and legal historians, connoisseurs of rhetoric and of the psyche. Though the judgements passed on Creon are, as a rule, less personal, less emotive than those elicited by Antigone, they are, often, more closely argued and in conflict.

The central dispute in Sophocles' play has frequently been perceived as one between archaic, familial usage and codes of sentiment on the one hand, and the new public rationality of the Periclean moment on the other. In the light of this interpretation, Creon's idiom, his legalistic stringency, his tactics in debate, have been qualified as 'sophistic'—not so much in a moral as in a technical and historical sense. In opposition to the 'death-rooted transcendentalism' of Antigone stands the secular 'enlightenment' of Creon. The catastrophe of the clan of Laius demonstrates that hoary irrationalities and obsolete manias have been at work. The abstraction, the civic impersonality, of Creon's governance represents the promise of a cooler but more lucid future. No doubt, the actual dramatic presentation of Creon does suggest Sophocles' doubts and unease as to such 'progress'. The poet is, himself, too sharply cognizant of the irremediable authority and sanctity of darkness in man. Nevertheless, we find in *Antigone*, no less than in Plato's dialogues, a searching, by no means unreservedly negative, consideration of the stance of the 'sophist'.[1]

Exactly the contrary thesis is urged with equal conviction. It is Creon who is the conservative, the conscious custodian of those long-sanctioned norms of civic life which are reflected, as we have seen, in such prescriptions against the burial of traitors in native ground as we have found them in Plato's *Laws* and Attic observance. Antigone's provocation stems not from

[1] Cf. W. Schmid, 'Probleme aus der sophokleischen Antigone', pp. 6–9, and R. F. Goheen, *The Imagery of Sophocles' Antigone*, p. 92.

antique tradition. It is, instead, a fragile intimation of humanistic ideals, of a categorical private ethic along Socratic, proto-Christian, and, ultimately, Kantian lines. When Antigone invokes the 'unwritten laws', she is summoning up futurities of conscience and individual compulsion alien to the norms and cohesion of the πόλις.[1] Creon's conservatism, his refusal to entertain the probing play of innovative, 'sophistic' sensibility, align him with the 'reality principle'. The Antigones, on the contrary, are the 'forward imaginers' (Ernst Bloch's phrase) who cannot, who must not, endure the weight and logic of the status quo.[2]

One of the most influential commentaries, that of Karl Reinhardt, sees in Creon the very type of intellectual, emotional limitation. He is a man circumscribed to the point of blindness within the bounds of his mediocrity.[3] Even the bizarre chain of misfortunes which undoes his good intentions at the close of the play is a result of his inadequacies. He is a man destined 'to come too late'.[4] Yet this same Creon is felt by another reader to be the embodiment of tragic awareness: 'As he stands at the end externally broken, internally humbled, and at last fully conscious of the depth of his responsibility, it is . . . Creon who draws most fully on our sympathy and who comes closest to embodying in himself a full attitude towards the tragic world we have seen unfolded.'[5]

Wrong, say others. In his final hour, 'the pasteboard tyrant becomes the most ordinary, if the most unhappy, of men'.[6] Of 'coarse fibre, commonplace mind, and narrow sympathies',[7] Creon is neither a great rhetorician in the new rationalist vein nor a severe statesman, but a politician seduced by vulgar power. Yet in his elucidation of the drama, an elucidation haunted by the pertinence of *Antigone* to twentieth-century conditions, Gerhard Nebel terms Creon *begeistert*,

[1] Cf. H. Höppener, 'Het begrabenisverbod in Sophokles' "Antigone"', *Hermeneus*, ix (1937), and H. J. Mette, 'Die Antigone des Sophokles', *Hermes*, lxxxiv (1956), 131–4.

[2] Cf. A. Lesky, 'Sophocle, Anouilh et le tragique', *Gesammelte Schriften* (Bern, 1966), 162–7.

[3] Cf. K. Reinhardt, *Sophokles*, p. 78.

[4] Ibid. 102.

[5] R. F. Goheen, op. cit. 53. Cf. also G. Méautis, *Sophocle, Essai sur le héros tragique* (Paris, 1957), 186.

[6] R. P. Winnington-Ingram, *Sophocles, An Interpretation*, p. 127.

[7] Ibid. 126.

'spirit-possessed'. Only such possession can account for the unbending, suicidal convictions which compel him to consign to extinction his own house and dynastic hopes. No less than other protagonists in certain Greek tragedies, Creon is a man in the hands of the daemonic.[1] Some interpret this state as, in some sense, metaphoric; it stems from a pathological consequentiality, a *follia logica*.[2] Others again perceive a literal madness. The folly which harrows the House of Laius, the madness of Eros visited upon Haemon, take on, in Creon, the concrete form of megalomania. Creon's reason succumbs to his fixation on the half-understood glamour 'of a great, imperious, regal personality (Oidipous)'.[3] He is simply not of a size to wrestle with that overwhelming shadow.

Most readers and producers will, however, prefer to consider the figure of Creon in reference to the general equilibrium of the play. If some commentators have insisted on the factitiousness of Creon's role and have denied him serious stature,[4] the great majority have registered the wondrous polarity of Sophocles' design. Creon *is* a commensurate counterpoise to Antigone. The problem lies in the true nature of their dialectical parity.

Are they not, in fact, profoundly similar? Are their characters not hewn to precisely the same 'sharp edges'?[5] Does Antigone's treatment of hapless Ismene not closely correspond to Creon's treatment of herself and of Haemon? The polemic intimacy between Creon and Antigone results from a clash of 'existential freedoms', poised, as it were, to a nicety. Neither can yield without falsifying his essential being.[6] Each reads himself in the other, and the language of the play points to this fatal symmetry. Both Creon and Antigone are *auto-nomists*, human beings who have taken the law into their own keeping. Their respective enunciations of justice are, in the given local case, irreconcilable. But in their obsession with law, they come

[1] Cf. G. Nebel, *Weltangst und Götterzorn: Eine Deutung der griechischen Tragödie* (Stuttgart, 1951), 181.

[2] Cf. M. Untersteiner, *Sofocle*, i. 131.

[3] G. F. Else, *The Madness of Antigone*, p. 101.

[4] Cf. H. Patzer, *Hauptperson und tragischer Held in Sophokles* (Wiesbaden, 1978), for a categorical statement. For A. J. A. Waldock, Creon 'does not approach within hail' of Antigone's stature (*Sophocles the Dramatist*, p. 123).

[5] Cf. A. Bonnard, *La Tragédie et l'homme*, p. 49.

[6] Cf. G. Ronnet, *Sophocle, poète tragique* (Paris, 1969), 187.

very close to being mirror-images.[1] Hence the close concordance of magnitude and tone in their successive catastrophes: 'That which is terrible in them (*Furchtbarkeit*) hurls them onward. They fall like titans into the abyss.'[2]

Yet it is the genius of the play, or of the underlying myth, to make of these undeniable parallels the markers of antithesis. This remains the irreducible marvel of the case. The balance is not, as Hegel would have it, one of matching equities, of final undecidability. Although it is, indeed, complicated by the similarities of vehemence, of stage presence, between Antigone and Creon, a true judgement must seek out the fundamental contrast offered by 'the noble folly of self-sacrifice' on the one hand, and 'the vicious folly' of arbitrary anger and self-infatuation on the other.[3]

But how does Sophocles achieve this dialectic of 'kindred opposites', a dialectic inexhaustible to reflection and re-enactment? 'The conflict between Creon and Antigone is not only between city and house, but also between man and woman. Creon identifies his political authority and his sexual identity.'[4] The play is shot through with intimations of this primordial antinomy, with echoes of the debate, palpable in the *Oresteia*, on the respective functions of the sexes in the determination and transmission of kinship and of lineage. 'It is in keeping with Creon's fierce adherence to the polis and his inferential, abstractive mentality that he leans heavily on patriarchal lineage and authority (639–647; cf. 635). His stress on patriarchy, though illogical in one sense (see 182–3), is congruent with his antifeminine, antimaternal attitude (see, e.g., 569).'[5] In the last analysis, therefore, the conflict is one between the masculine and the feminine conceptions and conduct of human life, this conflict being, like no other, one of paradoxical 'mirrorings' and implacable contrariety. Antigone speaks, literally as it were, 'out of the womb', out of a timeless centrality of carnal impulse and of domesticity with death. Creon's world is that of masculine immanence, of a willed

[1] Cf. M. S. Santirocco, 'Justice in Sophocles' *Antigone*', p. 186.

[2] E. Eberelein, 'Über die verschiedenen Deutungen des tragischen Konflikts der Tragödie "Antigone" des Sophokles', p. 30.

[3] I. M. Linforth, *Antigone and Creon*, p. 259.

[4] C. Segal, *Tragedy and Civilization, An Interpretation of Sophocles* (Harvard University Press, 1981), 183.

[5] Ibid. 184.

at-homeness in a sphere of political action and futurity. As Charles Segal emphasizes, in his fine reading, Creon envisions the earth in a dual perspective: it is a political terrain, and a place to be seeded and ploughed. Hence the aptness of Creon's retort to Ismene in line 569: after Antigone's death, Haemon will find 'other fields to plough'. (This phrasing is usually taken as evidence of Creon's brutality. It may, however, echo a normal formula of betrothal—'I give you my daughter for the ploughing of legitimate children'—in use as late as the end of the fourth century.) For Antigone, on the contrary, the earth is the house of mysterious engendering and of the dead. Thus a sexual polarity, which reaches beyond even the enormity of the explicit moral–political collision, holds Sophocles' drama and the continued vitality of the myth in tensed balance. The organic conflicts are given harrowing representation in the final tableau: Creon, left both naked and shattered in his manhood, stands between the corpses of his wife and of his son.[1]

7

But the lives of Creon extend far beyond scholarship and the continuous commentaries on Sophocles or Euripides. His ambiguous persona has attracted the political imagination both within and outside formal literature. The year 1948, for example, witnessed not only Brecht's vehement repudiation of the Hegelian defence of Creon, but a far more drastic critique and reversal of values. In his tract, part verse, part lapidary prose, *Antigone vierge-mère de l'ordre*, the eighty-year-old Charles Maurras totally inverted the customary understanding of the polemic between Creon and Antigone. In line with speculative paradoxes put forward by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century monarchists, Maurras proclaimed what had been his insight 'since boyhood'. Accepted interpretations of Sophocles' *Antigone* are 'un contresens complet' ('a total misprision'). The old lion has reread the immortal text. Now 'there can be no doubt': the rebel against civic law and order is *not* Antigone:

It is Creon. Creon has against him the gods of Religion, the fundamental laws of the Polis, the feelings of the living Polis. This is

[1] J. Goth, *Sophokles Antigone: Interpretationsversuche und Strukturuntersuchungen* (Tübingen, 1966), 201.

the very spirit of the play. This is the lesson which derives from it: Sophocles did not wish to portray for us the surge of fraternal love, nor even, in the personage of Haemon, Antigone's betrothed, that of love pure and simple. What he sets out to show also is the punishment of the tyrant who has sought to free himself from laws divine and *human*.

Thus it is Creon, not Antigone, who will destroy the city, an act the more transgressive as it contradicts the custodianship, the instruments of conservation, inherent in legitimate sovereignty. It is Creon, not Oedipus' child, who brings on the ruin of authority and of dynastic succession. Creon's edict against Polyneices is 'unconstitutional'. Such usurpation distinguishes the despot from the true king. It is, argues Maurras, 'a monstrous illegality'. Considered in depth, moreover, such despotism is a manifestation of anarchy in the spirit and acts of the ruler. We must, concludes Maurras, revise our entire millennial misreading of *Antigone* and of the moral–political issues to which it gives rise. It is Antigone, 'virgin-mother of order' (the Catholic inferences are obvious), who incarnates 'the closely concordant laws of Man, of the Gods, of the City. Who violates and defies all these laws? Creon. It is he the anarchist. It is only he.'[1]

The Dreyfus Affair, the division of loyalties during the Occupation, the success of Anouilh's *Antigone* and the controversy generated by the play,[2] have made French sensibility peculiarly alert to the claims of Creon. A generation after Maurras, but with no less casuistic edge and gusto, these are taken up by the *philosophe*-publicists of the 'new right'. Creon, affirms Bernard-Henri Lévy, is no spokesman for a frigid *raison d'état*. It is he, on the contrary, who incessantly invokes the patronage of the deities. This prince of Thebes is

[1] This pamphlet was printed in Geneva in 1948 under the imprint *Cahier des trois anneaux*. It was presented to Maurras by followers indignant at his condemnation and imprisonment after the Liberation of 1944. It is somewhat rare.

[2] The history of Anouilh's play, the reactions to it in France during the Occupation, the questions of policy and public opinion which these reactions involve, are the object of an exhaustive monograph by M. Flügge, *Refus ou Ordre Nouveau. Politik, Ideologie und Literatur im Frankreich der Besatzungszeit 1940–44 am Beispiel der 'Antigone' von Jean Anouilh* (Rheinfelden, 1982). But despite Dr Flügge's authoritative labours, certain points remain to be cleared up. The somewhat delayed ruling of German censorship in favour of the play, a ruling which seems to entail an acutely penetrative, sophisticated evaluation of Creon 'at the close', could well have involved referral to one or two of the great Sophoclean scholars then active in the Reich. Is this so? If so, are there any traces of their commentary on Anouilh?