

**Literary Club**  
**February 21, 2005**

**Creon's Ghost**

— **Joseph P. Tomain**

There was hint of neither ghost nor shade as I turned off the Autostrada mid-way between Rome and Florence to travel west into Val D'Orcia. Twenty kilometers or so later, due south from the hill town of Montepulciano, passed medieval towers and orchards of grape and poppy and olive sits Buonriposo, a villa the comforts of which I have partaken and enjoyed. Creon's Ghost is the product of a conversation that began in those hills, continued in other venues, and continues today. It is a conversation about a mystery older than Sophocles. While the Tuscan conversation had its precedents — often at local Cincinnati watering holes — discussion began in earnest on that hillside and more or less materialized, for me, in grey Britain.

From that hillside villa, just off to the west, at night after sunset, can be made out cars traveling along the via Cassia — the ancient road from Rome through Tuscany. At the end of another Roman road, much further to the North, lies the medieval university town of Oxford with its charms and charming buildings including Christopher Wren's Sheldonian Theater said to be "the most splendid room in Europe"<sup>i</sup> and modeled in part after the Marcellus Teatro in Rome. It was in that theater, at a poetry reading nearly a year ago, by Nobel Laureate Seamus Heaney, where the contours of Creon's Ghost first appeared with some clarity.

Heaney had just published his new translation of *Antigone*<sup>ii</sup> commissioned by Dublin's Abbey Theater and he included several verses in his reading which he prefaced by saying that his translation was a "letter to President Bush."<sup>iii</sup> Like many poets and playwrights before him, most notably in the 20th Century Jean Anouil's 1944 Paris production<sup>iv</sup> to over 500 audiences of Occupationists, Collaborationists, and the Resistance, Heaney turned to Sophocles to express his criticism of current politics. How is it that Sophocles speaks to us after nearly 2500 years? Or, as the great scholar-critic George Steiner put the question: "Why should it be that a handful of ancient Greek myths continue to dominate, to give vital shape to our sense of self and of the

world?”<sup>v</sup> To answer, we must go back to midnight at Buonriposo before returning to England.

Midnight in Tuscany is not the experience of Hamlet on the battlements. No fatherly ghost here. Instead, those midnight Buonriposo epiphanies were preceded by good food and good conversation. Our evening Tuscan disputes would start after bruschetta, and prosuitto e melone, then zuppa, and pasta and they would start before carne e contorni, salada, and dolci. Discussions would begin with a question and those questions would eventually lead to Creon’s Ghost. This ghost is a spectra of thought, a philosophical problem really. Not to put too fine a point on it, the problem is God — more narrowly, God revealed; more broadly, Belief. The nightly question would often be challenging such as “Did God create man? Or, did man create God?” and discussion would always conclude at the same point, the point that I later came to realize as Creon’s Ghost for Creon’s Ghost speaks only five words: “Because that’s what I believe.”

These dinner conversations often were not easy. Believers among us would think the answers obvious or that the questions were just the sort of academic folderol not worthy of much sustained attention especially on summer vacation. After all, faith is faith, and reason, reason; and, never the twain shall meet. Sceptics at table would find the desire for firm answers misguided because the questions posed needed to be unpacked and other questions raised in the pursuit of some evidence or some reason or some truth beyond the statement “Because that’s what I believe.”

As conversation continued, dinner participants would become either engaged or agitated. Regardless, most would drift off seeking other evening enjoyments. For some, often only two of us, those dinner conversations carried on into the night, concluding under the Tuscan stars with varietal grappa and Cuban cigars. How is it that the Toscano sumptuaries birthed a ghost? Surely it was not the Brunello, nor even the Reserva. No, although vino is a likely suspect to make us see the unseen, and while it may have verily loosened the tongue, it decidedly was not the cause of seeing the ghost in the Italian night.

Our conversations always led us to the ghostly apparition that contained a perplexing mystery: Why is it that Believers always want you to believe what they believe? For when Belief runs as deep as *nullus salus ex ecclesia*, there is no salvation outside the Church, then non-

believers must be burned to save their souls or condemned forever to be denied salvation. You must believe what the Believers believe on pain of being cast out, or declared evil, or even killed.

Far be it from me to bring apostasy into the Club, but Beliefs are funny and powerful things. Beliefs are powerful enough to stop conversation and in so doing they stop reason.

Here's an example. Every football weekend some player somewhere will exclaim: "I want to thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for this victory." Pausing to reflect, I have two. I first wonder what the other team, the losing team, did to piss off Jesus. I'm sure that once the coach finds out it won't happen again. My other reaction is : "Cool. You mean J.C. is kicking back with a cool one running the universe's biggest sports book? What's next? Hip-hop Jesus?" Now if anyone is impertinent enough to ask the young footballer "Don't you think that the Creator has more important things to do?" I am sure that his response would be "Well, I prayed and we won and I thank Jesus — Because that's what I believe."

As real as it is, that is a silly example of religious belief, there is certainly more to fear. Poet Adam Zagajewski says the "Ancient myths conceal immense dangers; they're bombs that must be defused."<sup>vi</sup> Such Beliefs are why young men fly planes into tall buildings; why bombs are strapped onto children to their parents' pride; and, adult politicians stand in the well of the House of Representatives and tell the nation that we should use our most sacred document — the United States Constitution — to restrict the rights of gay and lesbian persons to associate with whom and how they wish because, apparently, God said so, and "Because that's what I believe."

It is, of course, too easy to indict religion for its excesses. Isn't it true, after all, that religion gives us a sense of community, a place to wonder about the world, our place in it and beyond? Doesn't religion offer us the grace to serve when we cannot see beyond ourselves and a spiritual peace to comfort and calm us in questioning and troubling times? Doesn't religion offer redemption to those of us who have fallen and fallen more than once? Haven't the rituals of religion allowed us to touch the mysteries of our lives and of the world? And, doesn't religion allow us moments of transcendence? If you are standing in the courtyard of the monastery of San Marco in Florence and wish to see the monks' cells, you walk up a flight of steps to a landing. Then, turning right, as you continue up the steps, with each step is revealed more of Fra Angelico's *The Annunciation* — a religious fresco so stunning in its muted luminescence that if

you are not moved, you are not truly human.

Can we reconcile religious excess and religious poignancy? The sacred and the profane? Can we distinguish sinner from saint? Scoundrel from statesman? How is it that in 2005 the problem of Belief is still with us and, if you can trust the news, on the ascendancy? Perhaps we are simply hard-wired and belief systems are simply part of our frail human condition. There is much sociology, anthropology, and psychology to support the point. Yet as vital and fascinating as those disciplines are, they do not plumb the depths of the Beliefs with which we must live. Can we separate the City of Man from the City of God? Sophocles knew precisely how to do so; his protagonist did not. Herein lies Creon's Ghost. This journey to Classical Greece also takes us back North for it is Seamus Heaney's recent translation upon which I principally rely.

Let's go back to high school sophomore English when we were first exposed to Sophocles' *Antigone*. It has been written that during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century European poets, philosophers, and scholars thought that *Antigone* was not only the finest Greek tragedy "but a work of art nearer to perfection than any other produced by the human spirit."<sup>vii</sup> In support of that claim can be cited Kant and Kierkegaard, and Hegel and Holderlin. We can easily add Racine and George Eliot, Brecht and T.S. Eliot. Indeed, if one only read commentators on *Antigone* his education in *ars libre* would be complete. We can say, then, that *Antigone* is not the perfect art of anytime but of all time.

For most of us coming to *Antigone* we accept Hegel's argument that the play is about the conflict between an individual and the state<sup>viii</sup> which, of course, is why it so easily lends itself to adaptation throughout history. Hegel's point is attractive and he develops it in considerably more detail as a conflict between life and spirit; between public and private. *Antigone* is also a noteworthy battle between the sexes.<sup>ix</sup> Hegel's position is not one that I challenge. Instead of praising Antigone right off, rather, following Albert Camus, I take it that "Antigone is right — but Creon is not wrong."<sup>x</sup> It is the person of Creon and his actions that capture my attention. One can be not wrong and suffer the horrid tragedy that is Creon's fate. This finest of plays, this work of art, leads us directly into the eternal conflict between Law and Justice. A conflict that is aggravated when Belief intervenes. And it is a conflict which is as ripe today as when brash Antigone defied headstrong King Creon.

Before the action of the play, let's situate Creon. Creon is a member of the House of Laius — Oedipus' father and originator of the fateful tale. Creon is Jocasta's brother and, therefore, step-son and brother-in-law of Oedipus Jocasta's husband/son. Antigone, Ismene, Polyneices and Eteocles are all issue of Oedipus and Jocasta thus making Creon uncle to each.

What is never fully determined throughout the *Theban Trilogy* is Creon's rightful claim to the throne. His is not a path of clear ascension. In *Antigone*, the first play of the *Trilogy* written but last in the story line chronologically, Creon succeeds to the throne after Eteocles and Polyneices kill each other by the "double blow" of the sword.<sup>xi</sup> In the other two parts of the *Trilogy*, Creon succeeds Oedipus in *Oedipus the King*; and, in *Oedipus at Colonus*, the sons first defer to Creon's rule before taking over governance themselves.<sup>xii</sup> We might say, then, that Creon's ambiguous<sup>xiii</sup> claim to official authority is the result of ἐκλογή\_μφϋ\_βητήζιμος ;<sup>A</sup> in other words, Creon's is the world's first disputed election.

The backstory of *Antigone* is rich with prophecy and tragedy but for tonight's purposes the most relevant part of that story is the prophecy that Eteocles and Polyneices would suffer their dual death at each other's hands in the battle for Thebes. For once the brothers decided to share the throne in alternate years, Sophocles set the stage for Creon's rule and for his sad demise. Dual CEOs, apparently, have never work out very well. Eteocles, enjoying his reign, was reluctant to leave the perks of office even for his year off and Polyneices attacked the city to claim his birthright.

Creon enters the play through the opening dialogue between Antigone and Ismene in which the two sisters argue literally and ultimately to a death about the new King Creon's "proclamation"<sup>xiv</sup> or "general order"<sup>xv</sup> or "edict."<sup>xvi</sup> I have given the names used in various translations for Creon's action. Not being trained in either Classical Greek or philology I want to be on secure ground for identifying what Creon did for with that single speech act Sophocles not only sets the play in motion to its tragic conclusion, he gives life to Creon's Ghost.

"Edict," "general order," or "proclamation" all collapse into one word — law.<sup>xvii</sup> One

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<sup>A</sup> Pronounced: *ek-log-AY am-fees-bay-TAY-seem-os*. I thanks Vasilios Spyridakis UC Law Class '06 for this translation all mistakes in transliteration are, of course, mine.

does not have to be a member of the legal priesthood to know that the word law has its many meanings. But Creon's law is clear. He just never understands its application. It was Creon's law that Eteocles, the patriot, would receive a hero's burial and that the traitor, Polyneices, would not. Instead, Polyneices was to be dishonored and his body was to be left as carrion for the birds that flew and the dogs that roamed those dry Theban streets. Moreover, anyone caught attempting to bury Polyneices would suffer death.

Creon's desire to dishonor Polyneices might well have been quite enough for Antigone to act, to honor her brother, to honor her family, and to honor her conscience. But there was so much more for her. Quoting Steiner: "Creon's edict is political punishment; to Antigone it is an ontological crime."<sup>xviii</sup> Antigone knew that the disgrace Creon imposed by law, human law, on her brother Polyneices went beyond the incivility of having his dead body eaten and destroyed by animals, and her actions were more than simply giving Polyneices his due burial dress. For without proper burial, Polyneices' soul would never reach Hades and would forever be condemned to roam the space between this world and the next. Creon's law was intended to punish not only the soldier; it was intended to punish the soldier's soul. For Antigone, Creon's law went beyond insult, beyond disgrace, and most importantly, beyond Creon's legitimacy.

Fully aware of Creon's law, the so-called "law of the land,"<sup>xix</sup> Antigone sought to enlist the aid of her sister, Ismene, to help bury Polyneices in defiance of Creon. Rejected by Ismene, Antigone, in turn, rejects her sister and goes about alone executing her familial duty. Later, caught in the burial act, she is brought before her uncle, boldly admits her deed, and equally boldly faces her sentence of death. Death is Antigone's end and Antigone's death is Creon's end too.

This description of the action makes the play look fairly simple. As characterized by classicist David Grene, *Antigone* is the story of a ruler who makes a mistake, finds himself opposed because of it, misunderstands the opposition, and persists in his mistake to his fate.<sup>xx</sup>

Were the story so simple, the play could have ended quite early. Once confronted with the perpetrator of the crime, punishment could have been swift and complete if Creon ordered Antigone to her death. Instead, however, of immediate and summary execution, Antigone engages Creon in the first of three challenges to his authority. These challenges establish the architecture of the play. Immune to these challenges, indeed angered and insulted by them,

Creon eventually changes his mind but does so too late to his everlasting regret.

Antigone's challenge, as the challenges of Haemon and Tiresias latter to come, is clear, forceful and by all appearances not understood by Creon. That Creon so indulges his niece's challenge is not a matter of family loyalty; it is a matter of Creon's own weaknesses. Creon's tragedy was the result of his ignorance; his fatal belief in the myth of his kingship; his failure to understand the nature of his authority; and, his refusal to engage reason. Creon allows, indeed invites, Antigone to speak so that he can lord his will over hers and release his anger; he did not engage her challenge with measured response. Theirs was a dialogue of power not persuasion.

Antigone's challenge is the heart of the play exposing Creon's wrong thinking and wrong doing. Antigone's direct claim is as poignant as it is simple — Creon's edict prohibiting Polyneices' burial was not Creon's law to give.<sup>xxi</sup> Quite simply, Creon lacked authority. Creon's law of the land had no authority over familial law<sup>xxii</sup> nor over the law of the gods nor over the law of the dead.<sup>xxiii</sup>

The exchanges between Antigone and Creon establish the boundary markers for the eternal tension between Law and Justice. Creon's pronouncement was clearly law; it was also clearly unjust. The eternal problem is an epistemological one: How is it that we come to know whether a law is just or unjust? Subsequent, but by no means subsidiary, problems follow. If a law is unjust, must it be obeyed nonetheless? Or, and we can put the point more strongly: If a law is unjust, then must it be *disobeyed*? Somewhat more prosaically: What must we do in the face of unjust law? Antigone's response was swift and sure — Creon's law was unjust and she had an obligation to violate that law. The more subtle and more difficult issue involves the precise nature of the obligation to disobey.

On first reading, certainly for me and I suspect for most of us, Creon is so clearly wrong that it is difficult to recognize the dramatic, and indeed philosophical, tension in Sophocles' play. So, then, let's start not with what is wrong with Creon, but with what is right. After which, we can return to Antigone's plight. Creon's claim to issue laws is not without merit. For Creon to purport to issue a law, he must have a claim to authority. And, he does. His claim to authority must be substantial and especially strong for all that was at stake. Does his claim measure up? Creon had a questionable ascension to the throne; this was the first law he issued; he needed to establish his legitimacy and his authority; and, he needed to gain confidence as ruler. Thebes was

attacked and depending upon his response, Creon's kingship was at stake and, Creon's kingship was his being.

It is here, in his claim to authority, where Creon's position is least objectionable. He does not claim his Kingship by Divine right; rather he asserts it as a matter of hereditary succession. More dramatically, his claim to issue laws is based upon a claim of state necessity. He does not say "*L'Etat c'est moi.*" He rules by more than whim; he rules not just because he is King; he rules because someone must guide the ship of state; someone must protect the city; and most importantly, someone must do so with the city at war.

Creon's claim as War King and protector of Thebes does not fall on deaf ears. The Chorus of Elders<sup>xxiv</sup> recognizes that he saved their city from destruction and did so with the help of Zeus the God of War.<sup>xxv</sup> A city protected, gave Creon great stature:

He is a new King but he is right  
For this city at this moment.<sup>xxvi</sup>

So sing the Elders. A state threatened is a state in need of protection. Creon's obligation was to protect the city and he did so. To solidify his rule after battle he issued his law; a law that had to be honored and not violated because to do so would be to go against the good order.<sup>xxvii</sup> Creon took hold of the rudder of the ship of state and guided it through traitorous waters. He did so as much to prove himself, and be his own man, as he did to answer necessity's call. Nevertheless, the King must command the respect of the citizenry. To do so Creon knew that he needed to prove himself as a ruler to gain the confidence of the people<sup>xxviii</sup> for a "failure of rule [is] the most destructive thing."<sup>xxix</sup>

So Creon ruled, yet he suspected, maybe he even knew, that unless he ruled hard and swift that a "certain poisonous minority" would contest the rule of law and his rule in particular.<sup>xxx</sup> Those who would threaten the state can only be labeled traitor;<sup>xxxi</sup> and those who sympathize with traitors can only be labeled unpatriotic.<sup>xxxii</sup> Polyneices, the man who "terrorized"<sup>xxxiii</sup> Thebes, must pay and it is precisely here that Creon's otherwise legitimate claim to promulgate law falters.

Although Creon's claim to authority was uncertain; nevertheless, his justifications for defensive action and later promulgation are not. It is not hard to sympathize with Creon having

been a War King; having fought the good fight; having repelled the terrorists; and, having saved the state. In victory, Creon can honor the heroes and condemn the traitors. Yet something is wrong here and it is this wrong that is Antigone's challenge to Creon. For Polyneices is dead and King Creon's law of the land does not extend to the land of the dead.

Creon has been told of the crime by the guard who caught Antigone in the act. Perhaps in disbelief, perhaps with a small sense of due process Creon asks Antigone directly if what the guard said was true, "Did you 'dare disobey the law?'"<sup>xxxiv</sup> Her response is her challenge to Creon's legitimacy:

I disobeyed because the law was not  
The law of Zeus nor the law ordained  
By Justice, Justice dwelling deep  
Among the gods of the dead. What they decree  
Is in memorial and binding for us all.

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I abide

By statutes utter and immutable —  
Unwritten, original, god-given laws.<sup>xxxv</sup>

With these simple lines, the controversy could not be more starkly presented. Antigone knows her crime; it was a crime of politics — she wilfully violated the law of man. Her conscience did not give her the luxury of doing otherwise and her moral obligation to disobey the law was clear. However, instead of being condemned for a political act, she is being condemned for her devotion and her piety, for revering what was right.<sup>xxxvi</sup> Creon is oblivious of the line dividing man and god; he is oblivious to having defied the gods. He does not understand that the laws of the land cannot overrule the laws of the gods. Man's law cannot intrude onto the gods' law.

Imagine Creon's affront by this woman telling him he could not rule and him not understanding anything other than a woman's challenge to a man's authority. Not only is Creon unmoved by Antigone's challenge, he is angered by this mere woman and is made even more steadfast in his resolve to punish those who dare honor terrorists even if it means killing his son's

bride-to-be. Creon's response to this effrontery was to have her taken and given her due by his decree as head of state.

Enter son Haemon loyal to father, loyal to Thebes, and in love with Antigone. How can he confront such treacherous conflicts? Not well as it turns out.

Haemon addresses Creon as father and as King and professes love and loyalty befitting a royal son. He tells his father that his loyalty to him cannot supplant even his marriage promise. Creon's judgement is sound and should be followed, Haemon tells his father. However, good kings can be strong kings as well as thoughtful kings. To these ends of strength, goodness, and statemanship, kings should use all of the talents at their disposal including the talent of reason given to men by the gods:

The use of reason, father . . . The gods  
Have given us the use of reason.  
But do we use it right? Do I? Do you?  
It's hard to know . . . <sup>xxxvii</sup>

Creon, not surprisingly, after feeling insulted by Antigone, is stung by Haemon's words. Haemon speaks words of filial loyalty but to Creon his loyalty is suspect for love of a woman. Haemon's words are not the words of advice from an equal; they are heard as a lecture by a youth who never held the reins of state. Worse still, they are the words of a son betrothed to a traitor. Creon's anger toward Antigone as woman is transferred to his son for taking up the woman's cause.

Haemon's call to reason falls on deaf ears and he then pleads public opinion. Haemon tells his father that people of Thebes are talking and they are taking sides. Antigone, so say the people, should be honored as hero not punished as traitor, and yet if punished she should not be condemned. "Reconsider," Haemon pleads, it is the beginning of wisdom; it is what wise kings do.

The confrontation between father and son is acrimonious and Creon vows to have Antigone killed before Haemon's very eyes. Creon also vows to have Haemon banished from his household. A vow that causes Haemon to flee Creon forever. Upon Haemon's leave, that threatend loss of a son causes Creon to re-evaluate his law. For rather than summary execution, Creon changes the sentence and commands that Antigone should be placed in a cave with food,

thus, literally washing his hands of her blood. This softening of his punishment — entombment instead of execution — satisfies no one. Haemon has moved his father but not nearly enough.

The final challenge to King Creon comes from Tiresias, the blind prophet, who lost his sight and gained the gift of prophecy at the hands of the gods. Tiresias has watched over Thebes throughout the tragedy of the House of Laius and he has befriended Creon. With the help of his prophecy, Creon has saved the city. When Tiresias enters he does so with Creon's welcoming blessing and he is given Creon's full attention. That is until he speaks.

Tiresias wastes no time telling Creon of his dangerous position, "Where you are standing now/ Is a cliff edge, and there's cold wind blowing,"<sup>xxxviii</sup> he warns. Tiresias tells Creon that in all his days as a seer he has never heard the birds of prophecy screech and scream in such fury. Worse, Tiresias' offerings once brought to the alter were refused by the gods:

But the fire had no effect. It wouldn't take  
And none of the bits would burn.

Slime,  
Slime was what I got instead of flame.  
Matter oozing out from near the bone.

The fat stayed raw and wept into the ash.  
Everywhere there was this spattered gall  
From the gall-bladder.<sup>xxxix</sup>

That can't be good. The gods are revolted, he tells Creon, yet "Mistakes don't have to be forever/ They can be admitted and atoned for."<sup>xl</sup>

Creon hears neither Tiresias' fears nor his plea for reconsideration. Instead, Creon reacts to Tiresias exactly as he did to Antigone and to his son Haemon. He lashes out at Tiresias as someone who sells his prophecies for gold, a mere hired-gun.

All that is left for Tiresias is to tell Creon that his obstinance will result in consequences for the "flesh of your flesh." Again, Creon is told that his law was unjust for "No earthly power, no god in upper air/ Exerts authority over the dead."<sup>xli</sup> Only then, after repeated warning, does Creon vow to release Antigone but by then his fate has been cast and he must bare the ensuing tragedy. Creon finally succumbs to the entreaties and goes to release his prisoner only to

confront her suicide, his son's anguish, and his son's suicide, then his wife's own *hara-kiri*.

But why did Creon suffer? After all, he did change his ruling however reluctantly. Creon suffered not because of his reluctance, he suffered because he was never conscious of his wrong to the gods. He yields finally only because he knew he was up against a stronger force, the force of fate:

It goes against the grain. But I am beaten  
Fate has the upper hand.<sup>xlii</sup>

Says Creon as he gives in to fate even though he clings, tragically, to his claims of authority and to his Belief in the necessity of following man's law:

In my hear of hearts I know what must be done.  
Until we breathe our last breath we should keep  
The established law.<sup>xliii</sup>

Creon's conscious recognition is only a recognition that he was "smashed to bits by a god."<sup>xliv</sup> He never recognized that his law exceeded his rule. For as King, he could issue a law to bind man as citizen; but could not issue a law to bind the citizens of the underworld. His prohibition against Polyneices' burial interfered with the law of the gods and that prohibition conflicted with Justice. These failures of recognition had a devastating effect, for Creon finally acknowledges that "I am nothing now"<sup>xlv</sup> and "I am nothing more than nothing now."<sup>xlvi</sup>

Justice in *Antigone*, as the citizens of Thebes knew, as Antigone knew, as Heamon and Tiresais knew, was a matter of letting Polyneices' soul come to rest in Hades. It could not roam forever the netherworld. Justice is separating the laws of man from the laws of the gods. Creon's mistake was his failure to reason his way through the limits of his rule.

What makes Creon sympathetic is that he was caught in the paradox of wanting the law of the land, the human law, to have universal application when it can only have provisional and temporary application. His mistake was a human mistake with fateful consequences nonetheless. We want Law to bring stasis to a moving world; we want Law to bring harmony among men; we want Law to be fair and just. Such is our conception of Justice.

A few years after Sophocles wrote this play, Plato demonstrated that while that Ideal of Justice is alive in all of us; it is also hard won and very, very difficult to realize in our world. Justice cannot be realized without struggle, as Plato put it, without a struggle between the shadows of Belief and the light of the truth.<sup>xlvii</sup> Our reality is that we can only find Justice if we engage in that struggle between shadow and light and do so through reason. The struggle is difficult because Beliefs are so strong. Belief alone is insufficient to ground the Law and expect Justice to follow. This very night in this very Club, as an example, it would be unthinkable that anyone would stand up and argue from Belief that racial slavery is just. Different Beliefs obtained when the Club was founded. Then, in that not so remote past, those Beliefs were the law of the land with consequences far more tragic than what befell Creon.

No, Justice is hard won as Sophocles well knew for he concludes *Antigone* with this chorus:

Our happiness depends  
on wisdom all the way.  
The gods must have their due.  
Great words by men of pride  
bring greater blows upon them.  
So wisdom comes to the old.<sup>xlviii</sup>

Does Creon's ghost still haunt us? Well, I know one thing, I am looking forward to returning to Val D'Orcia and Buonriposo. I am sure to find good food and a fine Brunello and talk that will carry into the night, under the Tuscan stars with grappa and cigars. And, when the ghost does reappear he will be made not of smoke rings but of men's Beliefs such as "School textbooks should be labeled 'Evolutionary theory is dangerous to you scientific mind,'" or, "Marriage must be saved by denying it to select of our brothers and sisters;" or, "Stem cell research should be prohibited" — attempts all to instantiate Beliefs into our civic order through Law. Those efforts must be challenged or we will tempt, we may even realize, Creon's fate. Our challenge is to find the light of truth in the shadows of Belief — for that is where Justice resides. Because that is what I believe — with good reason.

## Endnotes

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- i. David Horan, *Oxford* 79 (2000).
  - ii. Seamus Heaney, *The Burial at Thebes: Sophocles' Antigone* 1 (2004) (subsequent page references are to Heaney's translation).
  - iii. See Seamus Heaney, *A Story That Sings Down the Centuries*, London Sunday Times 41 (March 21, 2004).
  - iv. Jean Anouilh, *Antigone* (Barbra Bray trans. 2000).
  - v. George Steiner, *Antigones* Preface (1984).
  - vi. Adam Zagajewski, *A Defense of Ardor* 6 (Clare Cavanagh trans. 2004).
  - vii. Id. at 1.
  - viii. Steiner, supra note 5 at 23-36.
  - ix. See Judith Butler, *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death* (2000).
  - x. Albert Camus quoted by Ted Freeman in his Commentary in Jean Anouilh, *Antigone* xiv (Barbara Bragg Trans. 2000).
  - xi. *Sophocles I: Antigone* 159 (Elizabeth Wycoff trans. 1954).
  - xii. David Grene, *Introduction in Sophocles' 1* (David Grene & Richmond Lattimore) eds 1954.
  - xiii. Steiner, supra note 5 at 111.
  - xiv. *Sophocles Antigone* 21 (Richard Emil Braun trans. 1973).
  - xv. Page 1.
  - xvi. Wycoff, supra note 10 at 3.

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- xvii. Page 2.
- xviii. Steiner, supra note 5 at 35.
- xix. Page 5.
- xx. Grene, supra note 11 at 3.
- xxi. Page 20.
- xxii. Page 4.
- xxiii. Page 6.
- xxiv. Page 24.
- xxv. Page 8.
- xxvi. Page 9.
- xxvii. Page 12.
- xxviii. Pages 9-10 .
- xxix. Page 30.
- xxx. Page 14-15.
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xlv. Page 55.

xlvi. Wycoff, *supra* note 10 at 203.

xlvii. *The Republic of Plato*, Book VII (Alan Bloom trans. 1968).

48. Wycoff, *supra* note 10 at 204.