

ANTÓN ARRUFAT'S *LOS SIETE CONTRA TEBAS*: POLITICAL ALLEGORY AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL
CONCEPTS AS VEHICLES TO PORTRAY THEATRICAL AND SOCIAL CONFLICT

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This thesis (i) presents a critical analysis of the political allegory and dramatic elements employed by Antón Arrufat in *Los siete contra Tebas* in order to comment upon the conflict in Cuban society during and immediately after the Cuban revolution; and (ii) further analyzes that conflict using an anthropological approach in order to establish partial reintegration as an additional final phase in the rites of passage journey.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapters	Page
1. SOCIAL CONFLICT: GREEK VS. BARBARIAN	1
2. THE CREATION OF A POLITICAL ALLEGORY	18
3. ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACH TO DEALING WITH SOCIAL CONFLICT	49
4. PARTIAL REINTEGATION: NEW HOPE FOR CHANGE	61
BIBLIOGRAPHY	77

CHAPTER 1

SOCIAL CONFLICT: GREEK VS. BARBARIAN

Artistic expressions often portray social conflict through the vehicle of political allegory. A political allegory is a device in which the characters and events correspond to their historical counterparts and are often used to comment on a political environment and promote a specific position. In the context of the plays to be examined, the political allegory pits the Greeks against the Barbarians. Expressions of this ideological polarization of Greek and Barbarian, as Hall asserts, "... pervade ancient art and literature from the fifth century B.C.E. and onwards" (*Inventing the Barbarian* ix-x). Hall further affirms that the Greek construct of the Barbarian was socially created along conceptual boundaries enforcing Greek superiority and supremacy in relation to all other non-Greek peoples. The Greek-Barbarian social conflicts in the plays examined in this thesis, though somewhat veiled in the allegory, also reflect celebrated "rites of passage" in society and manifest anthropological concepts.

Cultural anthropologist Victor Witter Turner (1920 – 1983) is most recognized for his extensive study of society's rituals, also known as "rites of passage" ("Rites of Passage" 256-259). According to Turner, rites of passage involve three phases: (1) *separation* or breach of customary relations due to an escalating crisis; (2) effort towards *liminality* or redressive action; and (3) *reintegration* or *schism* of the parties in dispute (*Ritual Process* 94). Each of these phases has the potential for social conflict. Turner's research examines how society handles the social conflict in each phase.

As a result of Turners' work, the anthropology of ritual, symbols, and performance in the dramatic arts has become fertile conceptual material, allowing for a cultural anthropological

approach towards interpretation of artistic expression. Thus, the three phase journey of Turner's rites of passage ascribes a dual construct of meaning: (i) a surface meaning evidencing the factuality of anthropologic rituality in the society depicted; and (ii) a below the surface meaning commenting on society's political condition. The underlying meaning lends itself to Turner's concepts and affords the construction of a political allegory to comment on the far reaching effects of socio-historic context on artistic expression.

Both plays of *Los siete contra Tebas*—the original written in 467 B.C.E. by the Greek Aeschylus and its adaptation counterpart by Cuban Antón Arrufat in 1968—evidence Victor Turner's concepts on the rites of passage and demonstrate the impact of socio-historic context on theater. This thesis cites the Spanish language translation of the Ancient Greek text housed at esquilo.org portal. Thus, all dramatic texts are presented in Spanish. This thesis references both titles of *Los siete contra Tebas* as *LSCT* from this point forward, and distinguishes between the two by also citing the author, as necessary.

Arrufat employs political allegory in his adaptation in a masterful way. He contrasts the fates of the heroes in these two versions of the drama to express the importance of freedom of mobility and exchange and to criticize the isolated and closed society of Cuba after the Cuban revolution in 1959 when Fidel Castro seized power (Kirk and Padura 34). The contemporary play advocates for these changes and uses Turner's three phase conceptual rites of passage journey to do so via its postulation of a "partial reintegration" as a grade of Turner's reintegration. Therefore, Arrufat's play allows for a dual interpretation: a political allegory commenting on contemporary politics and suggesting an alternative political view and an anthropological approach to the dramatic conflict.

In order to thoroughly examine this pair of dramatic works, it is necessary to establish their historical and political contexts, including further explanation of the Greek-Barbarian opposition, and Turner's anthropological concepts.

Allegory

Allegory is a category of comprehensive metaphors that frequently substitutes one component or symbol for another and in which objects, persons, and actions in a storyline equate with meanings exterior to the narrative itself. The clandestine meaning has moral, social, religious, or political significance. Thus, an allegory is a story with two meanings, a literal meaning and a figurative meaning. The word, *allegory*, derives from the Latin word, *allegoria*, which is a Latinisation of the Greek word, *ἀλληγορία*, meaning veiled or figurative language ("History of Allegory" 1). This implies that the meaning is not literal but is implicit. Marcus Fabius Quintilianus (35 A.D. – 100 A.D.), a prominent Roman rhetorician and teacher of oratory, separated allegory into two broad types: (i) allegories of ideas; and (ii) political allegories (Watson 6; ch. 8).

Allegory of Ideas

The poem "Psychomachia," also known as "Battle for the Soul of Man," was written in 405 A.D. by the Roman poet, Prudentius (348 - 413 A.D.), and is a prime case in point of an allegory of ideas. As characteristic of all allegories of this kind, the author generated the allegorical effect by means of personifications of abstract concepts. A person personifies each vice (pride, anger, envy, etc.) and virtue (charity, justice, prudence, etc.) making the otherwise theoretical battle a tangible one visible to the reader. Love has also been commonly allegorized, especially courtly love. "Le Roman de la Rose" (Romance of the Rose), a French

poem, pioneered the medieval love allegory and influenced it in all other vernaculars, most especially English, throughout the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries (Astell 81-83).

Political Allegory

Conversely, political allegories are those in which the characters and events characterize their historical counterparts. Perhaps the best known political allegory of English texts is George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, a satire of socialist communism first printed in 1945. However, the usage of allegorical text intended for historical and political ends is by no means a new phenomenon; it is a millennia old tradition established to be a purposeful paradigm within the arts and is documented since earliest records of antiquity. One of the best-known political allegories from ancient times is Plato's (427 - 347 B.C.E.) "The Allegory of the Cave" a compilation in Book VII of his best-known work, *The Republic*, a lengthy dialogue on the nature of justice. Another example, "Wynner and Wastoure" (Winner and Waster), is an incomplete Middle English poem penned sometime around the middle of the 14th century, which allegorically criticizes the socio-economic state under King Edward III. Thus, a political allegory is one that, literally, tells one tale, but figuratively, expresses a second hidden political meaning underneath the first. Political allegories comprise the history of all the arts, most probably because of their aptitude to exemplify multifaceted ideas and concepts in ways that are easily perceived. Political allegory can cover any time and space. It is not bound to the contemporary politics and history of the creator (Astell ii-ix).

The Constitutive Other

Preliminary conceptual delimitations are essential in order to appreciate the relationship between Greeks and Barbarians in the Ancient convention. Also paramount in this

discussion are the processes by which societies and groups exclude “others” who do not fit into their society or whom they want to subordinate. The Greeks labeled the “others,” or, rather more precisely, the constitutive Other, as the Barbarian.

Edward Said, cultural theorist and critic, popularized the concept of the constitutive Other in 1978 with the publication of his book *Orientalism*. Said analyzes the false cultural assumptions of the ancient and contemporary Western world and emphasizes that the constitutive Other, capitalized because it is an identity, merely designates an individual other than one's self. Consequently, the Other is thereby recognized as different. In other words, Self is the individual who views the Other. The Self identifies the constitutive Other, and the Self generates the Otherness through his own perspective, speech, and cultural practices. Otherness does not come from the constitutive Other being so different or behaving so differently that his characteristics create a distinguishing air about him. Thus, as Said affirms about the Self's perception of the constitutive Other, his,

... constitutive otherness, of an essentialist character. . . . This "object" of study will be, as is customary, passive, non-participating, endowed with a "historical" subjectivity, above all, non-active, non-autonomous, non-sovereign with regard to itself: ... [the only] "subject" which could be admitted, at the extreme limit, is the alienated being, philosophically, that is, other than itself in relationship to itself, posed, understood, defined—and acted—by others. (97-98)

There is no exchange; every determination of the Other is concluded without him. Self is the only actant force in this process.

Delineating which individuals comprise Self, and thus Us in the plural, and which comprise the constitutive Other, and thus Them in the plural, requires a means of assigning individuals, or more precisely societies, to two categories: (i) the Us category, esteemed because it exemplifies the norm standards of Self: and (ii) the Them category, commonly

demoted for its deviations from the norms of the Us, and thus exemplifying the differences of the constitutive Other. Discursive processes permit the dominant societies, the Us, (plural of Self) to relegate one or several societies, Them, (plural of the constitutive Other) by stigmatizing a difference, whether real or imagined. The dominant Us society considers this difference to be negative which produces, "... an antipathy which results from the instinctive dislike for manners and customs not one's own" (Jones 209), and rationalizes its prospective discrimination. In other words, fact yields differences and discourse yields Otherness. Thus, Otherness owes its advent to an applied principle dictating that all persons be assigned into two hierarchical groups: Them and Us. After dominant society identifies contrasting societies consisting of the constitutive Other, which is, "a selective identification of regions and cultures not one's own" (Said 120), it places itself at the top of this hierarchy, and proclaims itself to be Us. Therefore, the Self requires the Other to define itself, and neither one can exist independently of the other.

Power relationships definitively require these conceptual constructs to preserve an asymmetrical imbalance of power between the conqueror and the conquered. Thus, dominant societies largely depend on the implementation of Otherness to uphold relegated subordinations post conquest. Only the dominant society has the power to enforce its status quo through discriminatory measures. The dominant society propagates its identity as superior and defines the Otherness of subordinated societies as inferior. Subordinated societies are Othered only because they are subject to the dominating society's categories. They only stop being Others when they escape subjugation and set their own norms by discursive processes. The deciding power is discursive because therein lies the ability to impose categories. Therein,

too, lies Said's adamant insistence that, "it needs to be made clear about cultural discourse and exchange within a culture that what is commonly circulated by it is not 'truth' but representations" (22). This ability is not exclusively contingent on logical fortitude of the discourse, but also on the political and socio-economic standing of those who speak it.

Ancient Greece and The Constitutive Other

The ethnocentric predisposition that produces Otherness is no doubt an anthropological constant. Every society leans towards appreciating themselves and differentiating themselves from Others whom they depreciate. Ethnocentrism varies in expression but has always been contrived by discourse and practiced throughout antiquity. Some constructs are explicit to specific societies, such as the heterosexual/homosexual paradigm, while others appear to be universal, such as the male/female paradigm. Every society fashions the Self and the Other using its own set of categories. Ancient Greek society, however, stands out for two reasons. First, for Greeks, Otherness and identity are based on binary logic. Whereas most peoples acknowledge many outsiders and multiple groups of Others, Sir Jebb asserts that,

The Greeks were, in their own view, something even more than a chosen race; they were, as they conceived, a race primarily and lineally distinct from all the races of men, the very children of the gods, whose holy separation was attested by that deep instinct of their nature which taught them to loathe the alien. (417)

Despite the exaggeration, the Ancient Greek antipathy towards foreigners instigated them to formulate the Orient as a whole into one gargantuan constitutive Other. Greek thought is also of interest because its logic has been attached to the principle of identity in the West for millennia.

Greece and Geographical Others

In Ancient Greece, language and culture was the basis of establishing Otherness. Those who spoke Greek were pitted against those who did not. A Barbarian did not speak Greek and therefore had not mastered the foundation of rational argumentation and was not familiar with democracy. Therefore, his culture was deficient because he belonged to a non-Greek society. Otherness of this kind is centered on a hierarchy of societies and necessitates a universal measure to compare them. Language and governmental organizations sufficed this need before the emergence of today's major world religions.

Otherness also contains a geographical component because cultural constituencies allocate according to topographical borders such as nations and landmasses. Thus, geography proficiently manufactures Otherness. The Greeks' territorial organizations also accommodate this reasoning, but the end results differ. Territorial lines as the basis for geographical identities result in a dominant society on one side, and a non-dominant society on the other side. In Said's words:

 this universal practice of designating in one's mind a familiar space which is "ours" and an unfamiliar space beyond "ours" which is "theirs" is a way of making geographical distinctions that can be entirely arbitrary. I use the word "arbitrary" here because imaginative geography of the "our land—barbarian land" variety does not require that the barbarians acknowledge the distinction. It is enough for "us" to set up these boundaries in our own minds; "they" become "they" accordingly, and both their territory and their mentality are designated as different from "ours." (54-55)

Given that this practice is universal, as Said asserts above, it occurs on both sides of the divide. Territorial constructions create the identity-Otherness perceptions, and impede intermixing of the two. This practice occurs at all scales from gangs on different sides of the railroad tracks to nations on neighboring sides of federal boundaries. Subsequently, and as

Anderson affirms in his text *Imagined Communities* (1983), individuals come to believe that they owe their identity and superiority to the members of their territory, and they attribute perceived negative characteristics of other territories to the Otherness of its population.

The next section examines the Greeks' view of the Otherness of the Barbarian in Greek sources.

Greeks and Barbarians

A chronological philological examination of the word "Barbarian," and its changing subtexts in Greek society parallels an emerging xenophobic suspicion of the foreigner, and Greek society's formation of the cultural Other. What follows is a brief summation of the term "Barbarian" in Greek discursive writings from Homer to Aristotle. Analysis of these texts, according to Hall, highlights

... one ancient people's view of others... Greek writing about barbarians is usually an exercise in self-definition, for the barbarian is often portrayed as the opposite of the ideal Greek. It suggests that the polarization of Hellene and barbarian was invented in specific historical circumstances during the early years of the fifth century B.C., partly as a result of the combined Greek military efforts against the Persians...and were [was] to be of lasting influence on western views of foreign cultures, especially the portrait of Asiatic peoples as effeminate, despotic and cruel. (*Inventing the Barbarian* 2-3)

Said created the term "Orientalism" in 1978 to describe the Ancient Greeks' anti-Barbarian, anti-foreigner, anti-Orient attitude. Ancient writings effectively document the construction of the "Barbarian" as the cultural Other mirroring the birth of Orientalism.

The term Barbarian was once a neutral term empty of any meaning beyond non-Greek speaker and first appears in Homer's *Iliad* around 800 B.C.E. Homer presents Hellenic and non-Hellenic peoples without bias, specifically naming Argivians, Danaeans, Achaians and Pan-Achaians, and he does not tell of any cultural antagonism between the Greeks and other

peoples. The word Hellenic or Hellenes neutrally designated all Greek-speakers. In the *Illiad*, Homer only describes the Kareans, as *barbarophonoi*, or speakers of a babbling, unintelligible language (J. Hall 111). However, apart from their language, he does not make any further evaluation about them. The Greeks seem to be free of anti-Barbarian prejudice. Long affirms that,

For centuries there does not seem to have been any deeply emotional significance attached to the designation 'barbarian'...The prominence of the distinction between Hellene, or Panhellene, and barbarian underlines the basic distinction between the Greek and the non-Greek, and emphasizes the differences between the two, but as yet the term does not include any violent antipathy. (131)

Greek victory in the Persian wars instigated the word's shift to a derogatory connotation through xenophobic fear of the foreigner and a desire to relegate the recently conquered Persians to a position of inferiority. Long ascertains that,

... the great dividing point of Greek history on this question, [are] the Persian Wars. The experiences of the conflicts between Greece and Persia were the starting point for the greater development and extension of all the prejudices and feelings of exclusiveness toward barbarians...and accomplished the eternal differentiation of Greek from Barbarian...The Persian Wars, in one sense, never ended. (131-132)

Consequently, the Greeks began to build a new identity in direct opposition to their inferior Barbarian subjects. Their efforts transformed the entire Orient into one giant constitutive Other and constructed the first divide between the East and the West. These measures also effectively restricted the inferior Barbarians to the Orient and provided the geographical separation upon which the Ancient Greeks based their construct of Otherness. Aeschylus (525 - 456 B.C.E.) documents the contempt between Greeks and Barbarians in his drama *The Persians* in 467 B.C.E., and prejudicially represents the Barbarian. In this context, Hall states that,

It has been preferred, therefore, to characterize the ancient Greek world-view by such terms as 'xenophobia', 'ethnocentrism', and 'chauvinism' in its authentic sense, as a

doctrine declaring the superiority of a particular culture [Greek], and legitimizing its oppression of others [Barbarians]. (*Inventing the Barbarian* ix-x)

Thus, Aeschylus' portrayal affirms the connotative shift of the term Barbaric and its use to derogatorily signify the constitutive Other in contrast to Greek culture.

Herodotus (484 - 425 B.C.E.) also succumbs to this bias, and uses the word in a similar fashion. While he makes some of the more punitive criticisms of Barbarians, paradoxically he is also their greatest advocate. For example, Herodotus went against the grain of his time, and dedicated an entire chapter of his *Histories* to praising Egyptian ingenuity. Also, Jones confirms that Herodotus even to a degree, "...held the Persians in high esteem," and "According to him, the barbarians were capable of great and wondrous deeds, which ought not to be deprived of renown" (208). Yet, Herodotus simultaneously viewed other Barbarian peoples to be disgustingly repugnant. Specifically, he condemns, "the Scythians, though in other respects I do not admire them, they have managed one thing [...] better than anyone else on the face of the Earth: I mean their own preservation" (*Histories* 46; ch. 4). This comment all but regrets that the Scythians even exist and questions their value as a life form. Herodotus further degrades the Barbarian by describing their unlike-Greek practices in a scandalous fashion:

As regards war, the Scythian custom is for every man to drink the blood of the first man he kills. The heads of all enemies killed in battle are taken to the king; if a soldier brings a head, he is admitted to his share of the loot; no head, no loot. One strips that skin off the head by making a circular cut round the ears and shaking out the skull: [... it is] to be used as a sort of handkerchief... Many Scythians sew a number of scalps together and make cloaks out of them... having discovered the fact that human skin is tough. (*Histories* 64; ch. 4)

Thus, Herodotus' writings contribute a shade of grotesqueness to the word Barbarian. While it may be possible that some of Herodotus' portrayals are largely hearsay, the truthful content of

his accounts are irrelevant. What matters is the manner in which he represented these societies and his bias in chronicling only their Otherness.

Many of the most supposedly enlightened philosophers use the term Barbarian in a manner that synonymizes it with an inferiority that they affirm in opposition to Greek superiority. Plato (427 - 347 B.C.E.) not only exalts Greek identity in his discourses, but also calls for a ruthless discrimination in battle and the use of harsher tactics against Barbarian enemies given that, "The Hellenic race are children of one family, and conflicts between its members should not be called war, but civil strife. Our natural enemy is the Barbarian" (*Republic* 469b-471b). Plato is suggesting that Greeks alone battle like gentlemen and that Barbarians are incapable of such civility. There is also the suggestion that if Barbarians don't fight like Us men then they fight like animals. Plato's logic rationalizes the Greek-Barbarian distinction. In fact, in the *Statesman*, he declares it to be a case of inappropriate class partitions. Of the, "undertaking to divide the human race into two parts," he says to, "... separate the Hellenic race from all the rest as one, and to all the other races, which are countless in number ... give the single name 'barbarian'" (262c-d).

Aristotle (384 BC - 322 B.C.E.) radically alters the meaning of the term Barbarian. He culturally justified anti-Barbarian prejudice, and, "... held that barbarians were naturally slaves and incapable of self-government" (Jones 208). With derogation Aristotle cites that,

Yet among barbarians the female and the slave have the same rank; and the cause of this is that barbarians have no class of natural rulers, but with them the conjugal partnership is a partnership of female slave and male slave. Hence the saying of the poets – 'Tis meet that Greeks should rule barbarians– implying that barbarian and slave are the same in nature. (*Politicus* 1.1252b)

Aristotle's use of the word equates Barbarian and womanish slave and states that they only know how to be slaves; they are incapable of being freemen. Thus, Aristotle contributes to the term Barbarian connotations of ignorance and servitude. His comments not only voice Greek validation of the Self-Other paradigm, but also the master-slave dichotomy. Aristotle views them both with a similar attitude and popularized castigation of the Barbarian.

Greek playwrights also express a xenophobia towards the Barbarian, and depict Aristotle's popular philosophy in their works. In his examination of the Barbarian in Greek theater, Long emphasizes the fact that, "All of the comedy that we possess comes from after the great dividing point of Greek history on this question, the Persian Wars" (131). Thus, in his play *Iphigenia at Aulis*, Euripides (480 – 406 B.C.E.) portrays the Barbarian in accordance with Aristotelian views. The principal protagonist, Iphigenia, confirms that, "... it is right, mother, that Hellenes should rule barbarians, but not barbarians Hellenes, those being slaves, while these are free" (line 1400). Throughout the drama, Euripides continues with his portrayal of the Barbarians as natural slaves and a society without the rule of law. Euripides also depicts the Barbarian in his drama *Medea* in which he again expresses anti-Barbarian prejudice through the voice of the principal protagonist. Medea declares, "First, you now live among Greeks and not barbarians, and you must understand justice and the rule of law, with no concession to force" (line 534). Thus, he continues to equate savagery and anarchy with the term Barbarian and intellectual civilization with Greeks.

This thesis analyzes the two dramatic works of *Los siete contra Tebas*—the original and the adaptation—and discusses how the Greek/Barbarian opposition is demonstrated in each piece as well as in the political allegory that is constructed in the contemporary piece.

Dramatic Adaptation

Any comprehensive consideration of reinterpretations of classical Greek tragedy in contemporary Latin American arts must comprise Cuban dramatist, essayist, poet, and novelist Antón Arrufat (Santiago, Cuba, 1935-). Arrufat is reputed for incorporating classical models in his publications, especially in his drama *Los siete contra Tebas* published in 1968 post revolutionary Cuba. In that year, Arrufat notoriously garnered national attention when UNEAC (*Unión Nacional de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba*) first awarded *LSCT* top honors in the theater category only then to be successively denounced by Cuba's Interior Ministry for containing counterrevolutionary ideologies and banned in Cuba. Yielding to political pressure, the UNEAC subsequently publically condemned Arrufat's work for encompassing, "puntos conflictivos en un orden político, los cuales no habían sido tomados en consideración al dictarse el fallo" ("Declaración de la UNEAC" 7). *Los siete contra Tebas* was indicted as a counterrevolutionary allegory at the expense of the overriding need to subsume individualism to the collective action of the Revolution ("Declaración de la UNEAC" 14-15).

Arrufat's play is based on, and closely parallels, Aeschylus' play of the same name. In Arrufat's version, the UNEAC judges remarked upon a counterrevolutionary reproach of Castro's administration citing an allegorical connection between Arrufat's account of the attack on Thebes and the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion. Allegorically, the arrogant Etéocles was perceived to epitomize Castro (and therefore the Greek in the conflict), while Polinice and his Argive assailants were postulated to characterize the Cuban exiles (and therefore the Barbarians) who participated in the Bay of Pigs disaster. However, Barquet persuasively argues that Arrufat is merely critical of the revolution instead of truly counterrevolutionary (*El "caso" se investiga* 64),

and states that, “Arrufat propone, al final de su pieza, la consecución de una utopía social y política que en algunos aspectos (erradicación física de los líderes extremistas, conciliación entre exiliados y no exiliados) resultaba atrevidamente diferente a la circunstancia cubana” (*Teatro y revolución cubana* 75). Torrance further ascertains that, “Arrufat himself insists that he has never been counter-revolutionary and analysis of the play [*L SCT*] confirms this, but the play nevertheless presents criticisms of what the Revolution had become by the mid-1960’s” (294).

Despite its notoriety, *L SCT* was in no way Arrufat’s first reinterpretation of traditional Greek models. His adaptation, *Antígona*, published early in 1953, fifteen years prior to *L SCT*, is another such work of note, although it is composed in the form of a poem, and not a play. In the twentieth century, especially the second half, the international literary community recognized Arrufat for effectively incorporating ancient resource material to remark on contemporary cultural and socio-political conditions. Well before the 1960’s, his writing paid great attention to human relationships and to what it is inside that makes a man. Arrufat’s theoretical conjecture on humanness, markedly observed in *L SCT*, embodies an abridged account of his views at the time on society, humanity and philosophy. The analysis of Arrufat’s *L SCT* in this thesis will reveal his views during the years after the Cuban Revolution, not only with respect to Cuban society but also with respect to the human condition. Unfortunately, when *L SCT* was branded a counterrevolutionary work, Arrufat was formally ostracized; he was sentenced to 14 years without publication, and his writing was not printed again in Cuba until his “rehabilitation” commenced in the 1980’s (Kirk and Padura 32-33). Many of his dramas did not premiere onstage for several decades, and there are some that have still never been

staged. However, after almost 40 years of prohibition, Arrufat's *LSC* finally premiered in Cuba in 2007.

CHAPTER 2

THE CREATION OF A POLITICAL ALLEGORY

In order to perceive the political allegory in the Cuban play, an understanding of the plots of both the classic Greek play and the Cuban adaptation—and the differences between them—is imperative. This chapter summarizes the plot in each dramatic work and remarks upon the distinctions created by Arrufat's subtle deviations from the classic text.

Plot Synopsis of *Los siete contra Tebas* by Aeschylus

Eteocles, King of Thebes, reports to the city that Apollo's prophet has prophesied that the approaching enemy Argive forces will attack that night. This report immediately establishes the ancient conflict between Greeks and Barbarians by setting up a battle between Thebes, a Greek city, and Argo, a city of Barbarians, i.e., non-Greeks. Eteocles commands citizens and warriors alike to defend their city at the cost of their lives and to trust in the gods for protection. The scout appears and announces that the enemy army is already organizing an invasion force of seven chieftains, and he urges the king to select his seven most valiant warriors to defend the seven gateways into the city. The Chorus of young women enters, terrorized and wailing, and pleads with the gods that they not fall into enemy hands. Eteocles enters, enraged by their pessimistic and defeatist attitude, and scolds the women for creating excess fear among the citizenry. He further orders that anyone who dares wail again be stoned at the hands of the city. A woman's purpose, he declares, is to be a quiet homemaker.

The Chorus alerts the city of the enemy's arrival. Again they become panic-stricken and return to praying and pleading with the gods. Eteocles again commands the women to be quiet; they should instead encourage their warriors. Eteocles informs his people that he's going

to place a brave warrior at each of the seven city gateways to prevent the enemy from penetrating the walls. He, himself, will defend the seventh gate. The Chorus remains alone to imagine what the battle and its outcome will be like.

Eteocles and the Messenger appear with the Chorus. The Messenger describes one by one the seven Argive fighters (Barbarians) that have been designated to attack each of Thebes' seven gateways. As he does so, Eteocles assigns a defender to each gate to face each enemy opponent. The women of the Chorus commend themselves and their seven champions to the gods for protection and pray for victory. Finally, the Messenger tells Eteocles that the enemy warrior in front of the seventh gate is his own brother, Polinices, who has returned, motivated by vengeance and the hardships of his exile, to punish the one who caused him to endure all that, his own brother.

At this point, the Greek/Barbarian conflict is no longer black and white as Eteocles realizes that his brother, who is Greek, is fighting with the Barbarian army against the city of Thebes. The Messenger exits as Eteocles remembers the character of his brother when they were young, and that the rule of justice does not permit Polinices to escape with his life. He decides to face his own brother at the seventh gateway. The Chorus pleads with Eteocles not to stain his hands with the blood of his brother, but Eteocles ignores them in the name of honor. He argues that no man can avoid his fate as destined by the gods and that this is merely the fulfillment of Oedipus' curse on his two sons, each at the hand of the other. Thus, Polinices, born a Greek and brother of Eteocles, has been reclassified as a Barbarian by his own brother who prevailed in the power struggle between the brothers. Eteocles' actions make it clear that Greekness can be lost and is not based solely on geography, language or heritage but can be

conveniently redefined by an opposing force of any kind or by the person in power, as in this case, by Eteocles.

After the completion of the battle which occurs offstage, the Messenger arrives and announces the deliverance of the city. Thebes has won the war and has been saved from destruction by its enemies, but it has lost both sons of Oedipus, each killing the other. The Chorus addresses the protector gods of the city and asks them if they should rejoice for the rescue of the city or mourn the death of their king. An emissary enters together with the two princely corpses and their mourning sisters, Antígona and Ismene. He proclaims a king's burial for Eteocles and a prohibition against the burial of Polinices, who is to be left on the ground outside the city walls for the dogs.

Plot Synopsis of *Los siete contra Tebas* by Antón Arrufat

King Etéocles appears with the Chorus and informs the city that his brother, Polinice, has betrayed them and returned with an army of foreigners (Barbarians). Two spies report that the enemy will attack that night with an invasion force led by seven warriors. Etéocles orders the citizens to arm themselves and take posts in doorways and on the towers of the wall in defense of the city. The village men exit leaving Etéocles to ask himself if it is really necessary that he face his own brother at the point of a sword and if it is necessary that he sacrifice himself for the safety of Thebes. In this play, the Greek/Barbarian conflict is also immediately apparent; however, Etéocles, the Greek, appears to struggle more internally before reclassifying his own brother as a Barbarian.

Now enters the Chorus of five women. Both physically and emotionally overcome by fear, they wail almost in a hallucinatory state about their envisioned horrors of the bloody

conflict to come. Etéocles reappears infuriated because of the women's depressive and defeatist attitude. He asks them to stop their wailing and announcing of disasters before they happen. Etéocles attempts to comfort them and insists it necessary to fight against fear in order not to become enslaved to it. Etéocles begs them to keep their fears silent and to sing a hymn of happiness and hope. The women do so as they help the men carry weapons to their stations. Etéocles then selects six warriors to defend the city gateways. He himself will guard the seventh. The six defenders appear on stage, and the Chorus of women helps them to put on their protective armaments. One by one discussion between the warriors and women reveal each to be from a different walk of life. The women announce that their men are ready and that the city is in their capable hands. Two spies enter with Etéocles. As the spies reveal the identity of each enemy warrior on the other side of the gateway, Etéocles assigns a capable defender to face him. As each warrior is assigned his gate, the women return to their fears and hallucinate about the dead bodies of their men, violated young women, and enslavement at the hands of their enemy.

One of the spies reveals that it is Polinice at the seventh gate. Etéocles laments at this terrible circumstance. After the spy suggests selecting another adversary to face Polinice, Etéocles is left alone on stage. Polinice then appears alone and unarmed, soliciting his brother a truce, saying that he has halted his army at the city gates. Polinice offers Etéocles the opportunity to surrender the city in one piece, without fatalities, and forego the embarrassment of a defeat. Etéocles refuses to accept; Polinice is a traitor who has armed a foreign army against his home city. Polinice retorts that Etéocles is not innocent either. He accuses Etéocles of breaking their agreement to share power and govern in alternating years,

driving him into exile and thus giving him no choice other than to return with an armed force. Étéocles argues that if he took power it was to correct the errors of his brother. The two do not reach an agreement, and Étéocles expels Polinice. By witnessing the argument between the brothers, the spectator gains insight into the power struggle that resulted in Polinice being expelled by Étéocles and reclassified from Greek to the status of a Barbarian.

The Chorus declares that only death awaits at the seventh gateway, and they plead with Étéocles not to stain his hands with a brother's blood. Both men, because of their disastrous behavior, will be victims of their pride. Étéocles reflects aloud only to go forward proclaiming that it is his duty to protect the city above individual interests. The women await to hear the result of the battle. Two spies enter and proclaim that the city has been rescued by its warriors but that both the brothers have fallen, each closing the eyes of the other. The Chorus is emotionally torn between celebrating victory and mourning the loss of two sons. The society decides to bury both Étéocles and Polinice with honors. The equal burials given to Étéocles and Polinice indicate that the citizens of Thebes reject Étéocles' classification of Polinice as a Barbarian and view him, instead, as their Greek brother.

Plot Differences in Dramatic Context: Greek Classic vs. Cuban Adaptation

Arrufat references Aeschylus' classic Greek tragedy, *Los siete contra Tebas*, as the blueprint for his contemporary drama of the same name. Although they postulate the same theme, which is addressed more specifically later in this thesis, each drama makes its proposition from a different viewpoint, also to be discussed herein. This section looks first at Arrufat's deviations from the classic Greek transcript as well as details incorporated into his

contemporary work. This section also examines Arrufat's essential character transformations that make his contemporary drama a truly new and original classic in its own right.

It is important to note that Arrufat's adaptation was written in 1968, after he had witnessed the Cuban revolution, Castro's rise to power and dramatic changes to Cuban society under the dictatorship of Castro. Many, if not all, of the differences in the Cuban adaptation can be viewed, and will be analyzed in this thesis as an attempt to draw parallels between the characters and actions in the play and those in contemporary Cuban society giving rise to the political allegory. The parallels created by the differences in the two plays give rise to a political allegory in which Etéocles represents the Castro figure and those Cubans supporting his revolution, Polinice represents those Cubans in exile as a result of Castro's rise to power, and the Battle of Thebes represents the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961.

To avoid confusion in discussing these dramas, it is important to note that although the character names only differ marginally between the two plays, there are two principal variants. Namely, these are the protagonists wherein Arrufat's characters "Etéocles" and "Polinice" replace Aeschylus' "Eteocles" and "Polinices". These variations are minor but can be somewhat confusing when referencing both works in comparative analysis. That said, however, this examination clarifies between the classic and contemporary, as necessary, by also citing the author.

At the beginning, Arrufat's plot structure faithfully parallels that of Aeschylus' homonymous composition; both tragedies open with a parliament from the king of Thebes. He announces to the city that his brother Polinice has returned with a foreign army of Argive soldiers (Barbarians) ready to invade the city: "Escúchenme. Mi propio hermano Polinice,

huyendo de nuestra tierra, olvidando los días compartidos, la hermandad de la infancia, el hogar paterno, nuestra lengua y nuestra causa ha armado un ejército de extranjeros y se acerca a sitiar la ciudad” (Arrufat 27). Although the Aeschylean King Eteocles does not yet know that Polinices is among the ranks of enemy soldiers (Barbarians), and therefore does not include his mention in his speech, he addresses the town in very much the same terms as his contemporary counterpart: “Por el momento, hasta el día de hoy, la divinidad se inclina a nuestro favor, pues ya en este tiempo que estamos sitiados, en su mayor parte, gracias a los dioses nos va bien la guerra...” (Aeschylus 21-24).

Arrufat’s plot continues to mirror that of Aeschylus’ as information gathers about the Argives’ magnificent seven who are charged with spearheading the attack and penetrating the city’s seven gateways. In Aeschylus’ drama, the Scout and the Messenger report to the king that, “...os he dejado echando suertes sobre cuál de ellos, en virtud del sorteo, llevaría sus tropas contra cada puerta...” (Aeschylus 55-56). Here, Arrufat deviates from the classic transcript and replaces these two characters with two spies. Thus, the spies also report to the contemporary Etéocles that, “... Cada uno de los caudillos se repartió en el juego una de las siete puertas de la ciudad. En ese momento, sin saber qué puerta les deparó el azar, decidimos venir a informarte.” (Arrufat 29). Here, the contemporary text echoes the classic almost verbatim.

Arrufat maintains Aeschylus’ use of the soliloquy for Etéocles’ to express his hopes for a victorious encounter and pledge himself to the Theban cause, declaring, “Que estos hogares no se derrumben bajo el golpe enemigo. Que el polvo de sus piedras no se disperse en el viento...” (Arrufat 30). At this moment, however, Arrufat introduces a change in the form of an omission.

At no time in this soliloquy, nor at any time in the contemporary play, does Etéocles place his trust in the deities. Neither does he ever commend the destiny of Thebes to the will of the gods. His classic counterpart, however, finishes this patriotic soliloquy with a prayer appealing to, “Oh Zeus, Tierra, dioses protectores de nuestra ciudad, y maldición Erinis muy poderosa por ser de mi padre, no arranquéis de raíz, destruida por el enemigo, a una ciudad griega” (Aeschylus 69-72). Here, the classic Eteocles remits himself, and all of Thebes, to mystical powers. Such veneration of the power of divine intervention is commonplace in Aeschylean writings. Ancient Greek society revolved around the deities, their worship and their active involvement comprised part of everyday living. Therefore, his character’s espousal reiterating that fact accurately reflects that society.

Arrufat also omits the Oedipal curse from his work entirely. This change more than deviates from Aeschylus’ transcript; it radically alters *LSCT*. Eliminating the curse changes the spectator’s viewpoint for all of the play because it removes the origin of the conflict. Without a place to lay the blame, one has to open-mindedly thoroughly assess the situation and all parties involved before assigning responsibility. Arrufat’s drama does precisely that by means of his character transformations. Emphasizing their human aspects, and by not answering the question before it is asked, Arrufat reconstructs a fresh approach to this millennia old tragedy. This open-endedness at the beginning of the plot originates in the contemporary play since the classical Eteocles blames the Oedipal curse exclusively for the conflict he now faces.

Arrufat, however, eliminates all such references from the voice of Etéocles and “tratándose del enfrentamiento de los hijos de Edipo, también desde las primeras palabras de Etéocles se hace evidente el silencio sobre la historia de los Labdácidas y las maldiciones de

Edipo que son causa de la tragedia, enfrentamiento de los hijos de Edipo y la maldición de éste sobre sus hijos” (Morán and Montiel 263). By removing any element of divine origin and allusion to one’s fate, the contemporary author places all responsibility for one’s actions in the hands of human beings, and in this case, specifically, in the hands of the principal protagonists. Thus, the dramatization forces the characters and the spectator to deal with difficult and controversial issues such as fratricide from a mature viewpoint; the contemporary author removes the evasion of responsibilities as a possible escape. To provoke this emotional conflict, “No hay en Arrufat ni intervención de dioses, ni causa, ni destino inexorable al que se vean sometidos los mortales” (Morán and Montiel 263).

As the plot continues, the Chorus of Theban women appears immediately after the king’s exit. Terrified and overcome by their fear, the women make a great scene of narrating their frightening visions of anticipated onslaught and the destruction of their homes. Their demeanor clearly echoes that of the Aeschylean Chorus who also becomes paralyzed by fear. At this point in each play, both the classical Eteocles and his contemporary counterpart return and ask the women to stop making such a scene because it disheartens their countrymen and soldiers. However, each ruler’s approach and attitude toward the women is different, citing another contemporary deviation that is again in the form of a character transformation. Aeschylus’ Eteocles harshly addresses the women, and exclaims, “Os pregunto, criaturas insoportables: ¿Es lo mejor eso, lo que salvará la ciudad y dará ánimo a un ejército que está sitiado?” (Aeschylus 181-182). The King scolds the women severely, displaying little tolerance for their emotional pain. He not only reprimands them but also threatens to stone anyone who dares return to such behavior, threatening, “Pero si alguien no obedece mi mando—Hombre o

mujer o lo que haya entre ellos—se decidirá contra él decreto de muerte” (Aeschylus 181-82). Lesky affirms that the classical Eteocles inveighs the women with rampant fear (*Historia de la literatura griega* 275). Not only as a man but more precisely as a leader and guardian of the city, Eteocles perceives the female mob to be dangerous. It could provoke disorder. He cannot permit such emotional chaos to become an endangerment or a potential destabilizing force among the people.

By comparison, Arrufat’s Etéocles responds quite differently. While he does ask the women to stop, saying, “¡Mujeres! ¿Es ésta la manera de servir a la ciudad, de dar aliento a sus sitiados defensores?” (Arrufat 33), he also approaches them with an understanding attitude. The contemporary Etéocles’ tone soothes the women, and he attempts to calm them down by encouraging them not to become slaves to their own fears. He does not make threats or use coercion, but rather he simply listens reassuringly and,

el Etéocles de Arrufat intenta hacerles comprender que han visto alucinaciones, las tranquiliza y les pide colaboración... “les pido que no teman...les pido que se unan a nosotros”, lo que provoca una frase del coro que sí será del agrado de Etéocles: “nuestra suerte es la suerte de todos”. (Álvarez and Iglesias 262)

Etéocles’ patience, his willingness to discuss and be considerate with the women helps him gain their cooperation. This discourse, altered by Arrufat for his contemporary character, adds depth to Etéocles, and augments his relate-ability for all men and women in this audience who are familiar with the differences in how men and women react to the same situation. Etéocles takes on a more human dimension as a result of this conversation. This scene also portrays him to be a good leader because his actions resulted in the betterment of the people and produced a united front, even if only for the moment, thus permitting the spectator to draw a comparison between Etéocles and the Cuban leader, Fidel Castro. Castro, like the

contemporary Etéocles, had an uncanny ability to unify the populace against the enemy at a time of national crisis. Isabelle Torrance asserts that,

Arrufat himself has said of Castro's accession to power: "It was a moment of great energy, of great happiness, of great vitality. It was like breaking everything that had existed before; just destroying it. We didn't know... if what should have been done had actually been done or not, but that didn't matter then, what mattered was the enthusiasm of the moment, the magnitude of the time". This sense of "the moment" is conveyed by such phrases like *Es nuestra hora* ("The time is ours") spoken by Etéocles in his opening speech. (308)

Once he has calmed the women, Etéocles exits to go find six other champion warriors to help him defend the city's seven gateways. In fact, both Arrufat's contemporary piece and the Aeschylean classic are scripted almost identically at this moment:

--Parto a disponer seis adalides audaces para que las siete puertas de la ciudad defiendan. Yo seré el séptimo." (Arrufat 36)

--Yo, mientras, me voy a poner en las salidas de las siete puertas a seis hombres—yo seré el séptimo." (Aeschylus 282-283)

This is another clear example of Arrufat faithfully following Aeschylus' structure and text. Most of Arrufat's alterations to the play occur in his characters' development and in the portrayal of Theban society via those characters.

The next scene delineates the identity of the enemy offenders (Barbarians) and their defending counterparts (Greeks). Up to this point, Arrufat follows the Aeschylean plot structure closely with only slight changes. However, here he makes a definitive change. Arrufat converts the defenders of Thebes into characters via a supplementary scene with them and the Chorus. Arrufat's alteration is essential; he augments the play with another human dimension given that these six are only cited by the spy in the classic tragedy. At this point in the Aeschylean version, Eteocles and the spy form an antiquated dialog as the spy repeatedly leaves and returns bringing the news. Their conversation consists of dialogues in which the

emissary names and describes each one of the seven adversaries, their target gate for the assault, and Eteocles' reply designating a defender for each one. That is the scene. The defenders are limited to being a name in a list of names, and nothing more.

Conversely, Arrufat's contemporary plot fleshes out the defenders (Greeks), turns them into characters and brings them out onto the stage. They appear and participate in an armament ceremony in which the women in the Chorus help them put on protective garments and equip them with weapons. Arrufat makes this into a very long and dialogued theatrical scene in which the relationships between the women and the defenders magnify the human aspect of Theban society. It creates a new dimension so that the defenders become, "conocidos por el público gracias a las palabras que a ellas les dirigen" (Morán and Montiel 262). While the women help them on with their battle gear, five of the defenders—Polionte, Hiperbio, Megareo, Lástenes, and Melanipo—converse with them.

Through these conversations Arrufat succinctly reveals the personalities of these men as well as the depth of their emotional relationships with the women of the town. Behind these magnificent seven are seven real men tasked with great responsibility, and the spectator sees that. Polionte, embodies the masculine and universal protector as he encourages the women to take heart because, "Todos los hombres abandonaron sus oficios de paz. Nadie dormirá en su casa esta noche" (Arrufat 38). Hiperbio and Megareo lightly chat about being a school teacher and a farmer, providing a glance at what living is like behind the city's walls. Megareo's dialogue also allows the spectator to see an intimate moment with one of them, specified as Woman V of the Chorus, who could possibly be his wife. He tells her, "Perfúmate el cabello, y ponte para ese día una rosa y un ramo de mirto" (Arrufat 41). In another romantic moment,

Lástenes portrays hopefulness of the youth and a first love. He is the youngest of the defenders and is described as not even having his facial hair yet.

Lástenes talks with Woman IV and gives her a brooch to wear at the festival celebrating their victory. She replies saying, “Tejeré una tela blanca y me haré un vestido. Sobre mi hombro relucirá tu broche” (Arrufat 41). These two show such tenderness and hope for the future that one could assume that they are betrothed. In addition to these somber and affectionate moments, there is also light-hearted playfulness as Melanipo jovially declares that Lástenes will have to bring his flute and Megareo his zither to their victory celebration since they are so musically inclined. Showing us these men behind their armor, Arrufat further amplifies their humanness and puts the emotions of the spectator with each one of them.

Arrufat fleshes out the men and women and in so doing fleshes out Thebes, painting the daily living of its citizens who comprise all walks of life. The spectator is privileged to see the soldier who thinks about, “Mañana abriremos tu escuela otra vez... y en ella aprenderán nuestros hijos...” (Arrufat 39), and, “...plantaremos el naranjo al defenderlos esta noche” (Arrufat 40). Arrufat grants to these characters that are omitted by his predecessor, relationships at the human level that they maintain with the Chorus, and thereby also further humanizes the Theban women. By granting the contemporary Chorus an even more active participation than its classical model, Arrufat uses this dramatic device to describe the contemporary Theban population and the ability of its leader to unify a diverse population against an invading army.

The detailed description of these defenders of Thebes is also a clear picture of those who were actually defending Cuba against the invading army in the Bay of Pigs battle in 1961.

Castro successfully rallied the entire Cuban population—the peasants in the countryside, the factory workers, the farmers, the teachers, the students, men, women, and children all rallied to the cause. The entire Cuban population joined with the Cuban army which was very small at that time in order to defeat the invading army in the Bay of Pigs incident. In his writings about Castro's rise to power, Maurice Halperin describes his call to arms as follows: "In his appeal to defend the Revolution and the Fatherland he addressed himself almost exclusively to the 'common people', the people of 'humble means', the 'workers and peasants' who have been given arms to defend themselves against the 'imperialist exploiters' and native 'millionaires'" (99).

Next, the Chorus notifies everyone that Etéocles and the spies have arrived with more information about the seven offenders. Here Arrufat returns to paralleling Aeschylus' plot structure and "el mensajero describe uno a uno a los héroes gigantescos y amenazadores que van a atacar cada puerta, Etéocles contesta despectivo y designa un defensor para cada una"" (Adrados 26-27).

However, important in further developing the political allegory and as Torrance affirms in "Brothers at War: Aeschylus in Cuba", Arrufat describes the attackers (the Barbarians) with a different emphasis so that their characters represent those of the Cuban exiles who comprised the opposition forces in the Bay of Pigs invasion (298). Of particular importance is Arrufat's description of Hipomedonte, the second attacker who is rather different from his Aeschylean predecessor:

He is clearly a returning landowner intent on getting back his land. This is emphatic in the speech where the spy shouts and screeches in the persona of Hippomedon [(Hipomedonte)] who has "the skilled hands of a landowner" [{"hábiles manos de dueño de tierras"—Arrufat 44}] ...Arrufat's Hippomedon [Hipomedonte] must surely recall

prominent landowners whose motive in the expedition was to regain lands nationalized by Castro's 1959 Agrarian Reform Law. (Torrance 298-99)

This additional emphasis provided by Arrufat appears even more intentional when paired with the characteristics of the Theban defender assigned to combat against Hipomedonte. Hiperbio is assigned to fight Hipomedonte in both the Aeschylean and Cuban plays; however, in Arrufat's adaptation, Hiperbio talks about the school he has built before being assigned to fight in this battle (Arrufat 39-40). This addition in Arrufat's piece was not without significance:

The Agrarian Reform Institute (INRA), designed originally to supervise the re-organization of land, had subsequently become responsible for many projects in rural Cuba, including the building of schools. Arrufat's Hippomedon [(Hipomedonte)] is thus met by the very force which had deprived landowners like him of their land. (Torrance 299)

As the scene progresses, additional information is revealed about each of the seven attackers, and finally the spy reports that the attacker, "¡En la séptima puerta ésta tu propio hermano!" Polinice, who has returned motivated by revenge and the desire to recover his property (Arrufat 52). The contemporary Eteocles' response to the identity of the seventh offender reveals another character revision.

This painful circumstance that brings Eteocles face to face with his own brother originates in the Aeschylean drama. Upon hearing the news, the classical Eteocles once again remits himself, and therefore all of Thebes, to tragic destiny. He cannot and could not have avoided this situation because of Oedipus' curse on his sons, namely Polinices and himself. Eteocles laments this outcome, exclaiming that, "¡Oh locura venida de los dioses y odio poderoso de las deidades! ¡Oh raza de Edipo mía, totalmente digna de lágrimas! ¡Ay de mí, ahora llegan a su cumplimiento las maldiciones de nuestro padre!" (Aeschylus 653-655). This is

the voice of an Eteocles who is no longer strategically considering the protection of the city. His first words upon answering are to complain and blame everything on the Fate of his unfortunate lineage. He claims that the gods hate his family line. With this remark, the classic Eteocles again emphasizes that the deities are responsible, not the humans and not him. The spectator sees only a king whose worry over his own Fate is now priority. Eteocles' perspective and behavior is in accordance with the ancient Greeks' acknowledgement of Fate's role as an unstoppable reality outside the individual that shapes and determines human life. Given that the Ancient Greek understanding of fate asserts that "the most important forces which reward and afflict human life are out of human control" ("Greek Tragedies..." 2-3), the Aeschylean Eteocles' fate leaves him with a lack of responsibility because of his lack of choice, and his inability to alter his Fate.

On the contrary, the contemporary Etéocles speaks of doom, but he does not blame anything on a tragic Fate. Since the 17th and 18th centuries, the concept of Fate has been replaced with the belief in a human being's ability to reason and to choose. Men rather than gods are held responsible for men's actions. Etéocles laments that, "¡Al fin la fatalidad me pega en los ojos! En vano quise ignorarla. Creí que la acción de la guerra dilataría su llegada" (Arrufat 52). There is no mention of a family curse. Etéocles appears to acknowledge that he must face his brother and take responsibility for his prior actions—Fate is not involved. Etéocles, by his own actions, had previously seized power and property from his brother Polinice, thereby forcing Polinice to flee to a foreign (Barbarian) country. In the Cuban piece which was written in times of modern philosophy and existential reasoning, humans take actions and assume responsibility for those actions, rather than attributing events to the Hellenistic gods. Thus, it is

clear in Arrufat's adaptation that the gods are not the ones who decide, but rather the individuals involved. Thus, he introduces in his play the concept of accountability and responsibility for one's actions which allows the spectator to consider that the impending battle could be avoided.

Although Arrufat introduced numerous alterations in the Greek homonymous play when he wrote his own *Los siete contra Tebas*, his most notable change is Polinice's character conversion. Polinice's transformation dramatically deviates from the plot established in the classic Greek transcript and presents yet another very human angle. Arrufat develops Polinice into an active character giving him a presence and engaging him in discussion with his brother Étéocles. As Polinice faces his rivals, the spectator witnesses that confrontation. This is radically different since there is no character of Polinices in the Aeschylean drama. Polinices is only a name whose off-stage words and actions are reported to the audience. Arrufat, however, brings him before the audience and simultaneously fleshes out Polinice revealing the contemporary character's strengths and weaknesses, his thoughts and emotions towards Thebes' society and his rival, his brother Étéocles. Pain of his exile has palpably scarred the contemporary character, and fuels his eagerness to recover his share of his father's estate and the governorship of Thebes. The dialog between the two brothers permits Polinice to present his claim and denounce his brother's treachery, an aspect not mentioned in Aeschylus' play. Also, Polinice receives a more positive treatment in the face of his brother's pride and ambitions of absolute power. Thus, the contemporary piece presents reflections about the life of an exile and about absolute power, both of which are absent in the Aeschylean tragedy.

The entire development of the character of Polinice in the contemporary work serves to facilitate the political allegory. Polinice represents the Cubans who fled or were exiled from Cuba after the Cuban revolution and Castro's assumption of power. Like Polinice, some Cubans left because their lands and wealth had been confiscated under Castro's economic policies. Others left because voices of dissent or disagreement with the revolution were no longer tolerated. These Cuban exiles fled to the United States where they assembled together to form an opposition force against Castro with the backing and financial support of the United States. The United States had supported and provided aid to Cuba when Cuba won its independence from Spain and was a critical trade partner to the Cuban economy. However, Castro was no friend of "Yankee imperialism". "The national agrarian reform, the expropriation of foreign interests, the diversification of the economy, and the suppression of opposition were all carried out under the slogan 'Cuba, sí! Yanqui, no!'" (MacGaffey and Barnett 386). After Castro assumed power, Cuba began to cultivate relations with the Soviet Union causing the United States to become very concerned about a communist influence so near its borders. Just as Polinice returned to his homeland of Thebes to regain his property and his status, on April 17, 1961, an army comprised of the Cuban exiles (trained and financed by the United States) returned to Cuba in an attempt to oust the Castro regime. Just as Etéocles rallied the Thebans to defeat Polinice and the Barbarian Argives, Castro rallied the Cuban population to arms and soundly defeated the invading forces at the Bay of Pigs after three days of fighting (Halperin 101).

In the contemporary piece, Polinice appears before the battle, alone and unarmed, and solicits Etéocles to surrender the city under a flag of truce without fatalities. Face to face with

his brother, Polinice declares, “Te ofrezco una tregua Etéocles, Etéocles. Vengo a hablar contigo” (Arrufat 53). Polinice’s petition of a truce is not found in the classic drama. Therefore, there is no existing Aeschylean precedent of these actions; this is entirely of the contemporary author’s creation. Successively, the brothers begin an extended dialog in which both mutually reproach the other’s conduct. Polinice indicts his brother for breaching their agreement despite their sacred oath. “Pacté contigo...”, he declares, “...gobernar un año cada uno, compartir el mando del ejército y la casa paterna. Juraste cumplirlo. Y has violado el juramento y tu promesa...” (Arrufat 57). Etéocles at the same time accuses Polinice of betraying Thebes and arriving armed with an army of foreigners to annihilate his own city:

Para desdicha de Tebas hemos oído el estruendo de tu ejército. Vemos, yo y estas mujeres, relucir tus armas bien forjadas y la leyenda arrogante de tu escudo. Te has entregado a otras gentes, Polinice, y con ellos vienes a tu tierra natal. (Arrufat 53)

Polinice angrily responds with another accusation against his brother. He declares him guilty of abusing his power saying that, “Eres incapaz de gobernar con justicia. Te obsesiona el poder, pero no sabes labrar la dicha y la grandeza de Tebas” (Arrufat 59). Etéocles governed first, and Polinice argues that he did so with impunity thus obligating him to drive Polinice abroad into exile during his tenure without giving him the opportunity to rule. Thus, Arrufat’s play mediates between these two men. Also, Estévez affirms, Arrufat grants to both Etéocles, the chieftain, and Polinice, the exile, the chance to voice their side of the conflict (865).

The dialogue between the brothers gives further validity to the political allegory. The agreement to share power which Polinice accuses his brother of breaching is not unlike the breach of trust and misplaced expectations that occurred between Castro and his supporters:

What he presented as a humanist design for a fundamental restructuring of Cuban society, “revolution... with all the freedoms”, broke down under the impact of pressures

that his inexperience was unable to foresee and that his temperament in some degree provoked. The ideal revolution was designed to give way for better or for worse to the “real” revolution. (Halperin 2-3)

Abuse of power could refer to Castro’s nationalization of property held by wealthy Cuban landowners, or nationalization of factories and other investments in Cuba owned by United States investors—it could also refer to censorship of all those who spoke or wrote anything that could remotely be considered to be against the revolution and Castro’s policies (MacGaffey and Barnett 300-301). The Cuban exiles comprising the opposition forces at the Bay of Pigs could be viewed as a foreign army because of their opposition to Castro’s revolution and because they were backed by a foreign country (the United States). Their differences in political ideology and/or association with a country other than Cuba negated their status as Cubans (or Greeks) and converted them to the status of foreigners (or Barbarians).

The actions and words of Eté(e)ocles and Polinice(s) provide additional insight into these two men making each of them more human. The personality of the brothers originates in the transcript of the classic *LSC7*. Considering first Polinices in Aeschylus’ play, although he does not appear as a character, his brother describes him saying,

Pero ni cuando huyó de las tinieblas del seno materno, ni en los días de su crianza, ni menos aún al alcanzar la adolescencia, ni al contar ya con pelo en la barba puso en él la Justicia sus ojos ni lo estimó de alguna valía, ni creo que ahora, en el preciso momento que maltrata a su patria, vaya a ponerse cerca de él. (Aeschylus 664-670)

Polinices is portrayed as crudely ambitious, and now also as a foreigner, who refuses to relinquish his power and property in his homeland. His ambition is so great that he is willing to invade his homeland in order to appease it. Aeschylus’ Eteocles is represented as the good governor who defends the rights of the citizens. However, although he is the defender of citizen’s rights, Eteocles did not resolve the conflict with his brother democratically but in an

authoritarian fashion. He unilaterally and individually decided to break the agreement with his brother so that he could stay in power, and he does so a second time at Polinices' return. Eteocles ignores his brother's claim to his lawful birthright. Thus, Eteocles proves himself to be, "un ambicioso del poder y un tirano para quien no la comunidad, sino el poder lo significa todo" (*Historia de la tragedia griega* 209). It would appear that ambition has two faces in this family.

For the contemporary Etéocles, the community is everything. At least that is what he declares and uses to justify keeping himself in power. Etéocles claims that the city's safety is more important than personal problems, reiterating that "para ellos es mi acto, para ellos el fin" (Arrufat 62). He is dedicated to Thebes' cause for all Thebans. These words position him as a hero, and a martyr if need be. Similarly, Castro claimed to be one of the people and the leader of the people's revolution.

Polinice, on the other hand, appears to be absolutely dominated by egoism, just like the Polinices of the Aeschylean drama. Etched into his shield he boasts that, "Soy el Derecho. Devolveré su patria a Polinice, y la herencia de su padre" (Arrufat 52). Yet, there is more to Polinice than that. Torrance states that the confrontation between the two brothers reveals that, "Polynices [Polinice] is a far more sympathetic character than we have been led to expect and, all of a sudden, audience sympathy for Etéocles is challenged" (305). Because of his exchange with his brother, the audience, for the first time, glimpses the pain of exile, and sees his suffering which Polinice vengefully carries on his shield for all to see. Thus, by exposing Polinice's wounded side, Arrufat simultaneously brings to light Etéocles' own ambition, and the inconveniences of absolute power.

No agreement is reached at this meeting because neither one of the two will yield their position. The contemporary audience is “presented with two conflicting arguments, both of which are partly justified” (Torrance 306). Etéocles abruptly ends the conversation demanding that Polinice, “¡Sal de aquí!” (Arrufat 60). Determined to claim his rights Polinice responds with an ultimatum. He swears that, “No volveré al destierro. Etéocles. O entro en la ciudad victorioso o muero luchando a sus puertas” (Arrufat 60). Nevertheless, even though no agreement is reached, Polinice is instrumental in the Cuban adaptation because his presence and his reasons enable the audience to see the true motives that have brought this war to the city’s gates. It is not a foreigner’s ambition, but rather Etéocles’ political ambition that steers him to break the political agreement. Etéocles’ ambition led him to re-allocate his assets according to his self-imposed jurisprudence, excluding the one to whom it rightfully belonged. Seeing this facet of Etéocles forces the audience to step into Polinice’s shoes and better understand his position. Polinice seeks to reclaim justice by resuming the betrayed agreement and regaining his usurped power and property.

After their exchange, the brothers prepare to duel to the death. Etéocles pronounces, “Yo iré a encontrarme con él, yo mismo. Hermano contra hermano, enemigo contra enemigo. Ya no podemos comprendernos. ¡Decida la muerte en la séptima puerta!” (Arrufat 61). This text, almost verbatim, originates in the Aeschylean transcript. In the classical play, Eteocles proclaims that he goes to fight, “...Rey contra rey, hermano contra hermano, y enemigo contra enemigo...” (Aeschylus 673-674). This declaration provokes an insistent supplication from the society of Thebes. The Chorus reproaches Etéocles and asserts that he is acting on his emotions, out of pride not reason. In doing so the Chorus finds him to be no better than his

brother since, “Te estrechas a ti mismo, Etéocles. Tu mano en el aire tu otra mano encuentra. ¡Serás como él, víctima de la soberbia!” (Arrufat 61). The contemporary Chorus is reminiscent of Aeschylus’ chorus leader who attempts to stop the duel all together. He warns Etéocles that, “El fragor de la batalla enajena tu espíritu. ¡No viertas la sangre de tu hermano! Conserva tus manos puras, tu razón y tu prudencia” (Arrufat 62). Despite the clear gravity of this action, Etéocles insists on continuing toward disaster, justifying himself on his duty to the city.

Etéocles is really fighting against his own pride and desire for power. According to Torrance:

He governs alone and makes decisions alone, and lives in the ancestral house alone. He refuses to share power. This is an emphatic portrayal of absolute rule. Etéocles acknowledges that he broke his oath and that this was wrong, but he argues it was not unjust. The end justifies the means, so to speak. (306)

He battles an internal struggle that is pushing him towards death. Arrufat continues to transform Etéocles in front of the audience. He adds yet another dimension to him when Etéocles divulges his fears to the women of the chorus, confessing the most secret and intimate part of himself. He confesses his pain in facing Polinice, who is, after all, his own brother. They grew up together; they share the same blood. Etéocles reveals his internal struggle with ambition and pride. He shares these characteristics with Polinice, and yet, rejects him for it concluding that, “No avanzo contra él... sino contra mí mismo: contra esa parte de Etéocles que se llama Polinice” (Arrufat 62-63). With that, he continues arguing that the safety of the city is more important than his own personal interests, and makes his way to the seventh gateway.

The classical Eteocles does not self-reflect in the Aeschylean tragedy. This scene is entirely unique to the contemporary plot; it is Arrufat’s own creation and an echo of his own intention, his words, his thoughts. Dramatic moments such as these transfigure the legendary

conflict between two heroic giants into one between two men, real ones. Their humanness resulted in this conflict which is merely the consequence of their actions. The contemporary author gives great consideration to this human component. As seen already, he transforms his characters to show their humanness on several levels. The contemporary play dramatizes what men are on the inside that makes them do what they do on the outside and holds them accountable. This is not Fate or destiny. Arrufat's play transfigures the archetypal tyrant and the invader by magnifying their humanness. "Pues Etéocles y Polinice, para descender del pedestal en que Esquilo los colocó, hablan desde estas páginas con una autenticidad, con una poesía que los compenetra en lugar de alejarlos, que los reconoce hermanos en discrepancia..." (Melo 2). Thus, Arrufat adds human dimensions to his characters so that each spectator can relate to their thoughts and actions, both good and bad.

Next, Arrufat momentarily returns to following the Aeschylean plot structure. Just like the classic Chorus, the women of the contemporary Chorus remain alone on stage, and once again they become horrified by their visualizations of the battlefield and bloodshed. The women begin to wail, and Arrufat again strays from the classic transcript. He changes the choral dialog so that the women not only lament their predicament but also reproach their leadership. They bemoan the fratricide but also too for, "¿Qué esposo perdimos, qué hermano, qué amigo? ¿Cuál de nuestros hijos regresará?" (Arrufat 67). They ponder at finding themselves, the whole town, in the middle of a brothers' quarrel. They ask themselves, "¿Pero dónde está la culpa? ¿Cuál es? No quisimos otra cosa que vivir, que habitar la tierra y repartir el pan" (Arrufat 67). There are no traces in the classic piece of any such complaints from the town against their leaders. Thus, Arrufat chooses to accentuate the town's suffering; the

townspeople decided nothing and yet they still suffer the consequences of war. Arrufat not only points out that an individual—rather than the gods or Fate—is responsible for his actions. He also points out that an individual's actions have consequences that extend beyond himself to many others, in this case, to the entire Theban population, for which the individual is also accountable. Arrufat's philosophy is consistent with modern/post existentialist thinking prevalent at the time his adaptation was written.

The Chorus next recollects everything they have lost in past great wars, all their dead and their wounded. Never did they gain anything except pain and suffering from the great wars in Troy, Asia and Africa. Their leaders claimed all the plunder of the victory but, “nos devuelven cenizas y armaduras” (Arrufat 67). This reflection is exclusive to Arrufat's contemporary play; there are no referents for it in the Aeschylean tragedy. The Chorus' complaints are society's complaints; they highlight the position of an innocent town that suffers the retributions of a war caused by a brotherly quarrel. Citizens become warriors and fight a fight not of their making, but the penalty of loss is always theirs. Surely there are better ways besides war to solve a disagreement. Surely a dispute between two men should not be permitted to draw a whole country into war. One could argue that the contemporary play advocates for the people and promotes ways of resolving disagreements other than war.

Returning to the Aeschylean model, the two spies interrupt the Chorus and their visions to announce their victory in battle, and that their men secured the city's safety. Not all the news is happy, however. They also report that both Etéocles and Polinice were killed, “Y ambos los ojos se cerraron” (Arrufat 73). The Chorus does not know whether they should celebrate the victory or mourn their princes' slaughter. Allegorically, the Bay of Pigs invasion was a

victory for Castro, strengthening his power base in Cuba and vaulting him onto the international stage. Unlike Etéocles, Castro, himself, does not die in the battle of the Bay of Pigs, and at this point the political allegory takes a different turn. At this point, Etéocles can be viewed as representing not only Castro [the individual] but all of his supporters in the Cuban military and the general population who rallied to his side during the conflict. Thus, in the political allegory, the death of each protagonist represents the death of the Cuban brothers they represent in the allegory.

The bodies of Etéocles and Polinice are carried in just as happens in the Aeschylean scene. The Chorus gives tribute to Etéocles for his service to his city, and decides to bury him with full honors: “Tienes tus armas puestas, Etéocles, y está bien que así sea. Tebas se dispone a enterrarte con honores y tristeza, y está bien que así sea” (Arrufat 75). This text is another clear re-scripting of the classical Greek transcript when the herald interrupts to proclaim that,

Debo anunciaros el parecer del Consejo del Pueblo de esta ciudad de Cadmo. Decretó que a éste, a Eteocles, por amor a su país, se le sepulte en una fosa cavada con amor en nuestra tierra, porque escogió la muerte defendiéndola del enemigo (Aeschylus 1005-1010)

The herald continues with instructions for what to do with Polinices' body. He declares that,

En cambio, a su hermano, a este cadáver de Polinices, se ha decretado arrojarlo fuera y dejarlo insepulto como botín para los perros, porque hubiera sido el destructor del país de los cadmeos, si un dios no se hubiera opuesto a su lanza. Aunque no haya logrado su intento por haber muerto, se habrá ganado la mancha que constituye la ofensa que hizo a los dioses de nuestros abuelos. Los ofendió al lanzar al ataque un ejército de gente extranjera con que intentaba conquistar la ciudad. (Aeschylus 1013-1020)

The city council of Aeschylus' tragedy punishes Polinices for his transgression and rejects his body. Thebes, and thus Greek society in Aeschylean times, recognizes Polinices to be no more

than a foreign aggressor or a Barbarian. They do not recognize the brother of their king who left but only an enemy who returned.

At this point in the contemporary text, Arrufat deviates again. With respect to Polinice's body, Polionte, one of the six defenders, orders the women of the Chorus to bury him in the city alongside his brother: "Ustedes, sepúltenlo. Tendremos para él la piedad que no supo tener para Tebas" (Arrufat 77). Thus, contemporary Theban society shows a merciful indulgence of friendship to an enemy. This act of forgiveness, of humanity, is again exclusive to Arrufat's contemporary adaption.

Perhaps, through this act of forgiveness, the contemporary play proposes a more tolerant and inclusive society—one that focuses on those aspects that unite rather than those aspects that divide—a society that defines the term "Greek" to include brothers with differing views. The contemporary play could also be viewed as proposing a new society focused on forgiveness, reconciliation and on the acceptance of humanity. This could reflect (i) a desire and longing on the part of exiled Cubans (Barbarians) to come home; (ii) a desire for those who remained on the island (Greeks) to be reconnected with their exiled brothers; and (iii) at a higher level, a desire for free emigration of persons and ideas to and from the island without impunity. It is also noteworthy that where the City Council decided the fate of Polinices' body in the Aeschylean tragedy, Polionte and the women of the Chorus acting on behalf of the Theban society, decided it in Arrufat's contemporary piece. Perhaps the play also advocates a society in which the town takes a more active role in decision making, just as much if not more so than that of the government.

To conclude this section, in order to tell his own version of *LSCT* with respect to Aeschylus' classic tragedy, the contemporary author eliminates some of the characters because they are superfluous to the story he tells. Such is the case with Ismene and Antígona. Arrufat does not incorporate them into his play because their story is another conflict and another theme all together. Thus, they are better left for another play (Torrance 295). He also eliminates the herald whose function he transfers to the Chorus and Polionte, one of the six defenders. It is Polionte, a character that is only referenced in the classic work, who takes it upon himself at the end to determine what to do with the two princely bodies. Alternatively, Arrufat integrates into his play two spies who replace and assume the functions of the Messenger and the Scout in the Aeschylean tragedy. He retains the Chorus of Theban women thereby adhering to the classic pattern of female choruses. However, he grants the Chorus a special protagonist role. While Aeschylus' Chorus only functions peripherally, Arrufat's contemporary Chorus takes action in the plot assisting the defenders and participating far more than does its Aeschylean model. Arrufat's most radical alterations are his character conversions. He converts the six defenders into characters whereas Aeschylus only references them, and he also transfigures both Etéocles and Polinice, fleshing them out, and augmenting his play with a humanness component.

Nonetheless, the contemporary author appraises the drama in accordance with his time by assuaging the classic author's excessively long and grandiloquent parliaments. Arrufat maintains much of the communicative structure of the classic transcript, i.e. monologue, soliloquy, etc., but he subtly modifies them to be more current with contemporary language.

Also, he adheres to Aeschylus' classic precedent and writes his homonymous work *LSCT* in verse. He thereby preserves the effective poetics of classic tragedy.

The contemporary author also amends theater's fundamental element: the action. Since Aeschylus' Chorus only functions to clear up the plot, it repeatedly retards the dramatic action by doing so. Arrufat, on the other hand, configures a plot that increases in dramatic tension up until the point of the climax with the death of the two brothers. The author places the final decision as to what to do with the bodies in the hands of the Chorus and the defenders, who comprise the definitive society of Thebes.

Therefore, the Cuban author contemporizes Aeschylus' classic Greek *Los siete contra Tebas* with his society, namely that of post-revolutionary Cuba and adjusts it to reflect current affairs of his day thereby allowing for the development of a political allegory. To achieve this he did not resort to the easy solution of simply changing the play's setting, wardrobe, props, or character names to match contemporary world references nor did he insert giveaway clues to suggest specific persons, places, or times. Never is the word Cuba used in the play. He did, however, subtly transform the essence of the Greek drama into a modern provocative drama for contemporary audiences in the time in which it was created and for whom it was directed. As Barquet sustains, historicizing the contemporary *LSCT* is easy if one keeps in mind the characteristics of socio-political Cuba after the 1960's that have fomented the appearance of a very astute public audience capable of grasping any discourse or situation in which they recognize themselves ("Texto y context" 3). Barquet further ascertains that not only was the Cuban public quick and apt to perceive Arrufat's allusions, but so too the political establishment. Almost immediately upon release, the play generated suspicions in the island's

official culture commission. In fact, UNEAC verified their concerns of a counterrevolutionary ideology embedded within the play when it issued its “Declaración de la UNEAC” on November 15, 1968, and imposed severe censorship on the play. UNEAC also censored Arrufat sentencing him to fourteen years of silence without publication (Kirk and Padura 29). Viewed as a political allegory, Arrufat’s play clearly parallels the political situation in Cuba at the moment of its creation. The allegory is shocking in that it supposes a society that manifests the death of two extremist leaders. The allegory also advocates the reconciliation of the political exiles with those who stayed behind and supported Castro’s regime, a situation very unlike Cuba’s reality at the time (*Teatro y revolución cubana* 75). These propositions resounded with the contemporary society that endured Castro’s dictatorship and the pain of exile themselves making Arrufat’s *LSCT* as legendary as the Aeschylean tragedy from which it claims its birthright.

CHAPTER 3

ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACH TO DEALING WITH SOCIAL CONFLICT

By viewing these dramatic works through an anthropological lens, one can determine how each society deals with the conflict presented. This chapter will present a basic introduction to anthropological concepts relating to the rites of passage which is central to applying an anthropological analysis to societal change and conflict. Thereafter this thesis will compare the rites of passage journey of the protagonist in each play in order to establish partial reintegration as an additional final phase in the rites of passage journey.

Basic Anthropological Concepts Relating to Rites of Passage

British cultural anthropologist Victor Witter Turner (1920 – 1983) is best known for his work on symbols and rituals, and he has written profusely on rites of passage. His most important titles include the following: *Forest of Symbols* (1967), *The Ritual Process, Structure and Antistructure* (1969), *Passages, Margins and Poverty* (1974), *Process, System, and Symbol* (1977), *Social Dramas and the Stories about them* (1980), *From Ritual to Drama, the Human Seriousness of Play* (1982), *On The Edge of the Bush* (1985), and *The Anthropology of Experience* (1986). These publications constitute the pillars of Turner's approach to symbolic and interpretive anthropology as well as document his investigations seeking to interpret cultural symbols and better understand a particular society through its rituals. Turner's works build on the previous investigations of Arnold Van Gennep who invented the term "liminality" and published his development of the concept in his *Les Rites de Passage* (1909). As a result of Turner's and Gennep's investigations into the anthropology of ritual and its symbols, the

dramatic arts have appropriated this rich conceptual material, thereby enriching the possibilities of political and allegorical interpretations in the dramatic field.

Theater originates in Ancient Greece's festive rituals to the deity, Dionysus, evidencing the religious and historical connection between ritual and drama. Turner's concepts about the rites of passage delimit three different phases of social transitions: (i) separation; (ii) liminality; and (iii) reintegration (or no reintegration) (*Ritual Process* 94).

By means of the physical journey of the protagonists, each of these dramatic texts progresses through Turner's symbolically ritualistic three phases thereby marking the transition of an individual within his society. The Aeschylean drama exemplifies a journey that culminates in no reintegration. This thesis postulates that the contemporary drama exemplifies the portrait of a journey that culminates in a third possible outcome—partial reintegration—as a gradient of Turner's specified reintegration (or no reintegration).

Through an allegorical perspective, the contemporary play marks a change in the social structure that is highlighted by means of the allegorical journey. The concepts of the rites of passage demonstrate the impact of socio-historic context on Cuban dramaturgy. In the case of the contemporary work, the playwright and the spectators experience the play from their own historic moment within a social and cultural framework chronologically distant from their own, resulting in parallel journeys. The psychological transitions of the protagonist, the artist, and contemporary society are brought to life by means of theatrical political allegory.

Theoretical background: Arnold Van Gennep

Turner's theoretical precursor was Arnold Van Gennep, who, in his 1909 book, *Les Rites de Passage*, first developed the concept of the rite of passage. Gennep noticed that rituals

were generally organized into three major phases: rites of separation, rites of transition, and rites of incorporation. Such rites of passage suggest that they, "... serve to reduce the harmful effects to the individual and to society of changes which must inevitably take place in human lives" (11). Although some societies that Gennep studied are approaching the threshold of extinction, it is the adjustment to the changes that will help them to survive and to continue. This same process of adaptation is seen in the works examined in this thesis.

According to Gennep, although a complete scheme of rites of passage includes rites of separation, rites of transition, and rites of incorporation, "in specific instances these three types are not always equally important or equally elaborated" (Green 184). Therefore, not every phase receives an equitable division of emphasis among all peoples or in every rite of passage. This phenomenon is clearly evident in the dramatic works examined in this thesis through the emphasis placed on the final phase of reintegration for producing rebirth or change. The plays highlight and exalt the return and the reintegration (or no reintegration), establishing the allegory. Knowledge of the first two phases is expressed indirectly through dialogues; all the dramatic action presented on stage is dedicated to the third phase. However, Gennep recognized the transition, or liminal phase, of the *rites de passage* as being of particular importance, emphasizing that, "I propose to call the rites of separation from a previous world, *preliminal* rites, those executed during the transitional stage *liminal* (or threshold) rites, and the ceremonies of incorporation into the new world *postliminal* rites" (21). Thus, while Gennep's studies emphasize liminality, this thesis will focus on the final stage of reintegration as most important. That said, Gennep argued for the meaningfulness of each phase together with the others, not as single aspects in isolation from the rest of the ritual. He insisted that the

pattern, or sequence, of the ritual in its context is the source of its meaning, or in our case, the message of the allegory. He notes:

Our interest lies not in the particular rites but in their essential significance and their relative positions within ceremonial wholes—that is, their order... Beneath a multiplicity of forms, either consciously expressed or merely implied, a typical pattern always recurs: the pattern of the rites of passage. (190-191)

Thus, the rite of passage is an ongoing and progressive ritual. In a cyclical manner, the reintegration of one ritual rite of passage ultimately leads to the separation and beginning of another. Therefore, as Turner asserts, “social reality is fluid and indeterminate although regularizing processes continually transform it into organized or systemic forms” (*On the Edge of the Bush* 155).

The Specificity of Victor Turner

While Genep focused on the idea that ritual journeys of passage correspond to social processes from a psychological view, Turner saw this same social process as a mechanism of social change. Thinking of ritual as a way of arriving at the possibility of a social transformation, Turner postulates that the ritual is a social process upon which the stability of order and social tradition depend in order to deal with social conflict. He named this process “social drama”.

Similar to the three phases discussed by Genep, Turner’s “social drama” also has three phases: (i) separation or breach of normal relations due to a growing crisis; (ii) attempt at reparative action of liminality; and (iii) social reintegration of the conflictive parties (*On the Edge of the Bush* 1985). Therefore, Turner came to view ritual in terms of active reparation for resolving states of crisis and, “the pervasive theme of his work is conflict and resolution of conflict” (Bernard 212). Rites of passage, in this context, attempt to deal with such crises symbolically. In this context, Turner asserted that the analysis of the pattern of turbulences

affords profound information not apparent in ordinary conditions. It is from this perspective that one can postulate that when an individual, the protagonist in the case of a theatrical work, breaks with the traditional codes of his society therein incurs a social breach.

In his *Passages, Margins and Poverty* (1972), Turner states that these phases mark a passage from a “before” to an “after” in which the participants pass through a transitional period called liminality where they lack social status and are detached from the standard demands of society (398-439). This liminal in-between time is full of potential for change for the individual because established forms of behavior do not restrict him. Such a breach is followed by a liminal (transitory) phase and thereafter followed (or not) by the reintegration of that individual into his society. Such a breach of ritual tradition in the dramatic texts included in this study suggests social changes and permits the promulgation of a different world view beyond that existing in its historic moment. That proposition occurs via the journey and via the anthropologically significant experience of the protagonist previously unknown. Thus, as Turner asserts:

Mere experience is simply the passive endurance and acceptance of events. An experience, like a rock in a Zen sand garden, stands out from the evenness of passing hours, years, and forms what Dilthey called a structure of experience. In other words, it does not have an arbitrary beginning and ending ...but has what Dewey calls an initiation and a consummation. (*The Anthropology of Experience* 35)

Turner concentrated on understanding the edifices of a specific society and on how its many facets work to achieve its goals. Closed societies are accustomed to censoring everything unknown as danger—fearing it without even knowing what it is or could be. They censure external changes in order to resist them thereby demonstrating conflictive co-existence. Open

societies welcome the unknown and permit adaptation thereby demonstrating cooperative co-existence.

When a society faces change, it can accept (by overcoming or enduring it) or reject that change. Societies that are willing to change are typically stronger and more likely to conquer those societies that reject change. Turner wrote that, "Insofar as it is 'dramatic,' ritual contains a distanced and generalized reduplication of the agonistic process of the social drama. Ritual, therefore, is not 'threadbare' but 'richly textured' by virtue of its varied interweavings of the productions of mind and senses" (*Social Dramas* 161-62). He further argued the importance of social relationships which possess primordial value given that they, "not only concern the individuals on whom they are centered, but also mark changes in the relationships of all the people connected with them by ties of blood, marriage, cash, political control, and in many other ways" (*Forest of Symbols* 7).

This chapter examines these changes in relationships, and how they are connected to, and effected by, family in the Aeschylean *Los siete contra Tebas* and by established political power in the contemporary counterpart. Turner noted that such rites are especially prominent in societies with firm edifices which are centered on the nucleus of the family. He proposes that these are governed by an implicit tradition of values, norms, and symbols based in a constant cosmology, "where change is bound up with biological and meteorological rhythms and recurrences rather than with technological innovations" (*Forest of Symbols* 93).

Ritualistic Roots and the Genre of Theatre

Although there are several theories about the origin of theater, the most accepted is that theater has its roots in ancient socio-religious rituals. The word "tragedy", the first theatric

genre in Hellenic antiquity, has its etymological roots in the Greek word “tragos”, that means “song of the male goat” (Buckham 6). It is thought that it has to do with the sacrifice of a male goat and its relation with ancient ritual sacrifices to Dionysus. In that epoch of Ancient Greece, Aristotle suggested in his *Poetic Art* (330 B.C.E.) that *mimesis*, the imitation of a complete and noble action (chapter 6), was innate to human beings, and thus theater was inspired in rites and sacred demonstrations of its time. Also, as Aristotle pointed out in order to distinguish theater from poetry, drama was born out of the improvisation of the chorus that chanted the dithyramb. The dithyramb, a choral song in honor of Dionysus, god of wine, rebirth and fertility, was originally improvised, but later it assumed a pre-established and written form. It is theorized that in this moment, when the chorus chanted this song, that the *corifeo*, or the spokesman of the chorus, had separated himself from the rest and had begun to dialogue with the chorus. In this way, converting himself into a true character, the *corifeo* became the first character, and the dithyramb was transformed into theater. According to Aristotle, Thespis was the first person that played a role on stage, and thus he introduced this first character in addition to the chorus in the sixth century B.C.E. (Buckham 12).

Eventually, rituals became more, “... formalized, and stories grew up to explain the rituals... that people were impersonating gods, beings, or forces—from there resulted a developing dramatic sense” (Frazer ix). The acting out of these stories infused dramatic creation. Elam affirms that initially, rituals' concerns were religious; then, as society's self-reliance in man's own powers and abilities increased, it became more secular and dramatic elements increased (Elam 5). Eventually, theatre emerged, and the result was that the entertainment of the drama became more important than the ritual from which the drama had

been derived. As portraying the ritual through drama became less important than the entertainment derived from that portrayal, the drama became less of a reflection of reality and more of an interpretation of, and commentary on, reality. Thus, in considering the ritual accounts of the protagonist's journeys in these two plays, it is worth considering this understanding of ritual and social drama suggested by Turner.

Theoretical Considerations in the Plays

This section presents a detailed examination of Turner's concepts in the context of the Aeschylean play and its contemporary counterpart. Also, it presents two dramatic portraits: (i) that of Turner's specified reintegration (or no reintegration); and (ii) that of this thesis' postulated partial reintegration as a grade of Turner's reintegration.

Both plays present closed, secluded, structured, homogenous societies. In each play, the existing world view is that all human beings are divided into two categories: them and us. In the socio-historic context of Ancient Greece, Greeks viewed all non-Greeks to be undesirable and exogenous because they were different from them.

Despite the time span between the two pieces, in each case, everything foreign is rejected and feared because it is different. Thus, in the Aeschylean play, when the protagonist leaves his native community of Thebes and involves himself with the Argives (Barbarians), he fulfills Turner's first phase of separation and commits an unforgivable transgression against his own society—he breaks with tradition. Leaving his social status behind, the protagonist dies, metaphorically, because he is no longer one of them. He then fulfills the liminal phase of existing in the lands of the Others. The Aeschylean drama shares these same phases with its contemporary counterpart up to this point, and then the plays diverge. Also, in the

contemporary play, the presence of Turner's third phase of reintegration, or the lack of it, corresponds directly to another sociopolitical and historical view proposed in the play by means of the dramatization of the brotherly quarrel, the voice of the Chorus, and symbolic representations of blood. Oratory and gestural aspects of its characterization such as dialogue and its stylistic aspects and suggested corporal gestures give place to the theatricalization of political allegories.

Specific Considerations in the Plays

Both the classic *Los siete contra Tebas* and its contemporary counterpart demonstrate the far reaching effects of socio-historic context on theater through the portrayal of a contemporary society of Thebes in Ancient Greece. In the plays, Polinice(s) leaves the city of Thebes (separation), and travels to Argos where he lives for some time in the lands of the Barbarians—the Argives (liminality). Afterwards, he returns to conquer Thebes with a foreign army, is considered a traitor and is eventually killed. The two versions of the play diverge here. In Aeschylus' play, Polinices is denied a burial because he has sinned and transgressed, socially, by leaving his Greek status behind and becoming a Barbarian. His corpse is not even permitted to re-enter the society because of the Greeks' view of the Barbarian. This harsh and inflexible stance is in accordance with the Greeks' world view and concept of the Barbarian in this era. Thus, in the Aeschylean drama, Polinices does not fulfill Turner's final phase. There is no reintegration.

In contrast, in Arrufat's drama Polinice is forgiven and his corpse is accepted back into society and buried with funeral rites and honors alongside his brother, Étéocles, who never left Thebes. The contemporary Polinice thereby partially achieves Turner's final phase. Polinice

achieves partial reintegration in that his society reaccepts the body of the Theban that walked among them even though they killed the man who had lived as a Barbarian. Thus, society in the contemporary piece rejects the unknown change of Polinice (who is viewed as the foreigner and a Barbarian) just like the Aeschylean society. However, Arrufat's play ends in an optimistic tone signaling that total reintegration into one's country is a possibility since the society of his drama has changed by arriving at a middle ground which is labeled in this thesis as "partial reintegration". It reaccepts the man (his Greekness) but rejects his change (his Barbarity). Thus, it has changed and still survives; the same could be so in Arrufat's post revolution Cuba. From there, the point of reaccepting the man and his changes lies only half a step further out. This subtle difference in the ending of these two plays uncovers the political allegory, albeit veiled but inherent to the play.

Through the contrast in the fates of the protagonists in these two versions of *Los siete contra Tebas*, the contemporary piece proposes a different world view that allows freedom of mobility and exchange, and disapproves of isolated and closed societies. The forgiveness, acceptance and reintegration experienced by Polinice allegorically illustrate Arrufat's very personal desires for his own country of Cuba in that historic moment. When Fidel Castro succeeded in overthrowing the Cuban dictator, Fulgencio Batista, in 1959, Castro obstructed a massive exodus. Arrufat favors emigration from the island and advocates for free mobility and exchange of people and ideas to and from Cuba which is contrary to the policies of the Cuban government at the time (Kirk and Padura 34). By writing this play, Arrufat began his own journey into the Barbaric lands. By speaking out, Arrufat criticized the existing political structure, and was ostracized by the government of Cuba. As result of his writings that express,

“... su desacuerdo con los mismos por entender que son ideológicamente contrarios a nuestra Revolución” (“Declaración de la UNEAC” 7), the government, through the Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba (UNEAC), condemned him to fourteen years without publishing any works—resulting in his own liminal state. Tragically, the world view of freedom of, “...los elementos que el imperialismo yanqui quisiera que fuesen realidades cubanas” (“Declaración de la UNEAC” 14), that he created by means of political allegory in his play when he permitted Polinice to leave and return is denied to the Cuban people and specifically to him as a playwright. Thus, while Arrufat was able to partially improve the freedom of access and mobility in the life of the protagonist in his play, he could not accomplish the same feat in his own life. Sadly, Arrufat’s own fate more closely resembled that of the Aeschylean hero than that of his contemporary hero thereby clearly demonstrating the far reaching effects of the socio-historic context not only on literature but on real life as well.

However, after what appeared would be a permanent liminal existence for Arrufat, he finally began his ritual progression through his rites of reintegration when he began to be “rehabilitated” in the latter 1980’s (Kirk and Padura 32-33). Almost immediately post-liminality, the Cuban community once again began to recognize Arrufat and bestowed upon him prestigious awards: Premio de la Crítica (1985), Premio de la Crítica Literaria (1987), Premio de la Crítica Literaria (1987), Premio de la Crítica Literaria (2000), Premio Nacional de Literatura de Cuba (2000), Premio Alejo Carpentier (2000), and Premio Iberoamericano de Cuento Julio Cortázar (2005). Finally in 2007, *Los siete contra Tebas* premiered in Cuba under the direction of Alberto Sarraín after more than forty years of censorship. This host of literary prizes and the premier of *Los siete contra Tebas* all attest that Arrufat has completed his own ritual journey.

He dared to challenge the unknown (the Barbaric), the forbidden in the realm of Cuban artistic expression post-revolution. He survived his liminal existence of publishing silence and survived the threat of censorship. Today, the immense popularity of his works evidences Arrufat's social reintegration, via the phenomenon of a Cuban cultural renaissance in recent years, and Arrufat's reclaimed status as a prominent figure of contemporary Cuban cultural life.

CHAPTER 4

PARTIAL REINTEGRATION: NEW HOPE FOR CHANGE

As this thesis has demonstrated, Arrufat's adaptation comments on events in contemporary Cuban society via the element of political allegory. Further, anthropological analysis of the contemporary work also reveals Cuban society's struggle with change as clearly seen by applying Turner's phases of rites of passage to Polinice's journey. In addition to the use of allegory, Arrufat skillfully employs three dramatic elements which serve to further support the political allegory and to further amplify the anthropological result of "partial integration" espoused by this thesis; namely, (i) the dramatization of the quarrel between Etéocles and his brother, Polinice; (ii) the voice of the Chorus; and (iii) the thematic and symbolic representation of blood. Each of these elements affords commentary on social conflict (via political allegory), and examines how society responds to that conflict (via anthropological approach). The following analysis of these three dramatic elements presents a portrait in Arrufat's drama of this thesis' postulation of "partial reintegration" as a grade of Turner's specified "reintegration".

Dramatic Analysis of the Brotherly Quarrel

The brotherly quarrel initiates the social conflict within Thebes and simultaneously reveals Polinice(s)' rite of passage journey. In neither play are the first two phases of Turner's rites of passage dramatized. This immediately emphasizes the importance of Turner's final phase (reintegration) and sets the stage for critical analysis of the partial reintegration postulated by this thesis. This examination looks specifically at the journey's end and the fate of the Greek/Cuban protagonist to see how Theban society, representative of Ancient Greek

society and contemporary Cuban society, deals with social conflict of a returning expatriate.

The significance of Arrufat's dramatization of the brotherly quarrel is best seen when compared to its Aeschylean counterpart. In the Aeschylean drama, Polinices does not fulfill Turner's final phase of reintegration. At the culmination of his quarrel with his brother, he is denied a burial because he has socially sinned and transgressed against his native society by leaving behind his Greek status and becoming a Barbarian. He cannot be permitted to re-enter Theban society under the Ancient Greek world view of the Barbarian in the fifth century B.C.E.

As previously discussed, the Hellenic vision of the easterner cast as Barbarian holds center stage in this result. As Hall argues, the political crisis of the Persian wars inaugurated and intensified this type cast of the Other, for, "Although a sense of shared ethnicity between all Hellenes existed in the archaic period, it was the Persian wars which engendered the polarization of Greek and barbarian" (*Inventing the Barbarian* 60). Therefore, Greek ideology (embraced by the Aeschylean society of Thebes) is synonymous with this political Greek/Barbarian polarization (*Inventing the Barbarian* 2). Therefore, Polinices' sojourn among the Argives, eastern Barbarians, transforms him into an anti-Greek Barbarian in the eyes of Thebes. Consequently, under this world view, Polinices' journey through Turner's rites of passage and his fate terminate without reintegration specifically because, "... las muserolas silban un bárbaro sonido" (Aeschylus 463). Long further substantiates that, "there is [also] the acoustic factor of harshness and roughness [of the Barbarian]. Thus, the horses of Aeschylus' Seven against Thebes (464-64) blow a 'barbarian' whistle through their mouthpieces" (130).

Aeschylus does not present Polinices as the brother returning to finish a brotherly feud; Aeschylus dramatizes nothing of the feud except Polinices' return to end it. Therefore, he

presents Polinices as a Barbarian, foreigner and enemy; there is no human dimension. Upon his return, Polinices is thus eliminated as a threat to societal stability. In fact, one Theban, “sharply rebukes Polinices—not, however, for starting the quarrel, but for invading his homeland” (Thalmann 21). At its core, this is a brothers’ dispute, yet because it creates social conflict for all of Thebes, it is handled in accordance with this world view. The Barbarian is kept outside the walls of the city.

The brothers’ quarrel ends as it does because society not only fears Barbarians, essentially the foreigner, but also rejects the unknown. Therefore, in the words of Segal, the Aeschylean Polinices is:

The Greek tragic hero, [who] then, is not a “character” quite in the sense of the hero of a modern fiction or drama, an individual with a three dimensional idiosyncratic personality. He is, rather, both an individual caught in a moral conflict and a symbolic element in a complex socio-religious structure. (51)

Aeschylus presents the brothers’ quarrel and Polinices’ journey in the Ancient Greek socio-historic context which insists upon, “the assumption that Eteocles is innocent and Polinices is guilty” (Thalmann 21), simply because Polinices is unknown—he is a Barbarian. The Aeschylean Polinices remains an unknown because, “The hero of Greek tragedy stands at the point where the boundaries of opposing identities meet where the ‘identity’ in fact becomes the paradoxical conjunction of two opposites” (Segal 57). Thebes rejects the foreigner because its survival mechanism is to reject the unknown. For Aeschylus’ Polinices, “Tan pronto llegó, mató... se había salvado y expiró... perdió la vida” (Aeschylus 1275-1276). Thus, the Theban city magistrate decides that while Eteocles is to be buried with ceremonial rites, Polinices should be thrown on the ground outside the city walls, left to the animals. There is no reintegration for this protagonist. Such is the end of the journey and fate for the Aeschylean Polinices and the

price of maintaining the Greeks' perceived status quo of the superior Greek and the inferior Barbarian (Long 127).

By contrast, in Arrufat's contemporary *Los siete contra Tebas*, the Cuban Polinice achieves a grade of partial reintegration despite his sojourn among the Barbarians. At the culmination of his quarrel with his brother, Polinice is forgiven and accepted back into society when his body is buried alongside his brother who never left Thebes. Thus, the development and presentation of the brotherly quarrel in Arrufat's drama reveals that the contemporary society is less fearful of the unknown and is also more open to possible re-immigration into one's country, "reflecting in a critical way the new Cuban sociopolitical reality in the light of Greek dramatic tradition" (*Teatro y revolución cubana* 55).

Unlike in the Aeschylean drama, Arrufat gives the contemporary Polinice a voice and a dramatic presence at his return. Thebes brings the Barbarian, Polinice, inside the Greek city walls, and the society of Thebes along with the contemporary spectator comes face to face with him and hears him speak. Arrufat proceeds to dramatize a Polinice that is not just a Barbarian, but rather a disgruntled brother with a multi-faceted character and human dimensions. The Barbarian is seen, heard, and understood and as a result becomes known. Contemporary Thebes deals with this social conflict differently than did the Aeschylean Thebes. In fact, it is interesting to note that, "Arrufat's Polynices [Polinice] is not so barbaric in the flesh" (Torrance 312), and that the word "Barbarian" is never used in the contemporary play. It has been replaced with "foreigner" or "enemy".

Polinice's return in the contemporary piece marks the largest distinction in the dramatization of the brothers' quarrel between the Greek and Cuban plays. Polinice represents

the unknown world of the Barbarian to his fellow Thebans, and he takes the stage and speaks not only to Thebes but also to the spectator. Polinice transforms from the Barbarian, and is seen for what he is, an argumentative brother. Polinice reveals that, “No eres inocente, Etéocles... y que ese [mi] ejército está ahí, es por tu culpa” (Arrufat 55). He returns accompanied by these men, Barbarians, because “¡Ellos me ayudarán a restaurar mi derecho!” (Arrufat 55) as a Theban to be Theban and to return home to Thebes, his native society.

Against the contemporary king of Thebes, Etéocles, Polinice declares that, “has violado el juramento y tu promesa” (Arrufat 57). Despite Etéocles’ claims that, “rectifiqué los errores de tu gobierno” (Arrufat 57), Polinice verbally chastises him for abusing his power:

Solo gobiernas, solo decides... Para ti la Justicia se llama Etéocles. Etéocles la patria y el bien. Me opongo a esa justicia, lucho contra esa patria que me despoja y me olvida. La noche en que te negaste, lleno de soberbia, a compartir el poder conmigo, destruyendo nuestro acuerdo, lo está contaminando todo. (Arrufat 57-58)

Etéocles denounces Polinice assuring him that he will not reenter the Theban society that he has abandoned and betrayed (Torrance 305). “No acepto tu pureza, Polinice” declares Etéocles for, “está contaminada por los hombres [Barbarians] que te secundan” (Arrufat 59). Etéocles refers to Polinice as, “Mi hermano enemigo de Tebas” (Arrufat 59) and Polinice declares to Etéocles, “¡Eres el enemigo de tu hermano!” (Arrufat 59).

Etéocles views Polinice as his enemy—not as his brother and not as a fellow Theban. This irreconcilable difference, a difference in world view, must either be accepted or rejected. Although the quarrel ends in the death of both brothers in mutual fratricide, the adaptation ends in an optimistic tone and the, “espectadores familiarizados con dicha mitología... deberán estar atentos a los posibles cambios o desviaciones (transformaciones) que el autor haya querido hacerle a la trama en su nueva versión” (*Teatro y revolución cubana* 63).

By dramatizing the quarrel between the brothers, Arrufat gives Polinice a voice to speak for himself and on behalf of the world view he acquired during his journey providing additional information to the spectators and providing another side of the story. Polinice is partially reintegrated back into society because, despite his time among the Barbarians, his body was permitted to reenter the city and to be buried alongside his brother, and also because his ideology was given a voice in the dramatization of the quarrel with his brother. Throughout the play, another world view, acquired through the experience of separation and liminality and demonstrated by partial reintegration of the protagonist is established.

Arrufat's dramatization of the brothers' quarrel also serves to bring the political allegory clearly into focus. Polinice represents those Cuban brothers who have been exiled or who fled Cuba during the revolution in which Castro, represented by Etéocles, seized power. Although initially very popular with the Cuban people, Castro's nationalist movement of the people soon evolved into socialism and ultimately communism. Just as Etéocles refused to share power with his brother Polinice, Castro ultimately assumed absolute dictatorial powers and established a government that did not tolerate dissent or disagreement. In her analysis of Arrufat's play, Torrance submits the following:

Here are the two faces of rule which Arrufat presents us with: Polynices [Polinice] the traditional aristocrat, and Eteocles [Etéocles] the absolute ruler who has the people's interests at heart. And therein lies the paradox, for with absolute rule, the people no longer make decisions for themselves. Eteocles [Etéocles] decides what is in the interests of the people. (307-308)

After coming to power, Castro severed Cuban ties with the United States and other democratic governments thereby restricting free flow of trade and ideas with the northwestern

hemisphere. Therefore, “It has been said that Fidel promised one kind of revolution and delivered another” (Halperin 2).

Dramatic Analysis of the Voice of the Chorus

In both dramatic works, the Chorus speaks on behalf of its society and exemplifies how society deals with social conflict posed by Polinice(s)’ return. The response of the Chorus as it learns about each phase of Polinice(s)’ progression through the rites of passage comments on that society’s view of the Barbarian. Arrufat strategically employs the voice of the Chorus to reveal the struggles and conflicts within Cuban society during and after the Cuban revolution. This examination reflects why the returning expatriate does not achieve reintegration in the Aeschylean drama and but succeeds in achieving partial reintegration in Arrufat’s contemporary drama.

According to Hall, the Barbarian of the stage was a powerful cultural expression of Greek xenophobia and chauvinism, and reflects the treatment of foreigners (*Inventing the Barbarian* 5-9). This view of the Barbarian, which is in essence the foreigner and even more comprehensive, the unknown, is the driving force behind the actions of this society. The Aeschylean Chorus views Polinices immediately as part of, “la onda de los bárbaros (Aeschylus 390)... nuestros invasores” (Aeschylus 834). For a secluded society such as Thebes in which no one ever leaves, everything on the other side of their walls is presumed to be Barbaric.

The words of the Chorus divulge that isolated societies breed fear of this Barbarity. They are taken hostage by their fear, and hallucinate about nightmarish images of, “las calles de esta ciudad invadidas y a la tropa que prende fuego destructor” (Aeschylus 290). The Aeschylean Chorus even admits that in the presence of the unknown, “el terror me arrebató la

lengua”(Aeschylus 339), revealing that communication suffers when fearful emotions assume control. Thus, Thebes’ closed society becomes almost handicapped in the face of a Barbarian. To maintain order, the Barbarian must be eliminated; it is a survival tactic.

Given this view and response to the Barbarian, allowing Polinices’ body to be returned for burial (after he is rejected and killed for being a Barbarian) to his homeland might set a bad precedent or cause the existing social structure to become unstable as already seen in the behavior of the Chorus. Polinices engaged in an exchange of cultures, one that the Theban chorus fears the city itself could not survive, especially when considering that after having immersed himself among the Barbarian Argives, Polinices returned possessing such “cuajada negra sangre de ese crimen... del hierro de corazón cruel” (Aeschylus 730-739). This reinforces the Greek belief that everything outside of their walls is Barbaric and is to be feared. There seems to be no memory or recollection of the Polinices whom they loved as a fellow countryman. All that remains are the doubt and fear of the Polinices who is a man contaminated by Barbarianism. However, this harsh and inflexible stance is in accordance with the classic Greek view (*Inventing the Barbarian* 13-17), and its ritual presentation in the drama serves a dual purpose. The status quo or social order affirmed by Aeschylus’ presentation of Turner’s rites of passage evidences that the ritual is both literal and symbolic. According to Segal,

The ritual represented as a part of the tragic action is therefore a symbol with a symbol. It is both a literal recreation of the cosmic order in the regular succession of stylized acts performed just as they were... and at the same time a symbolic expression of the order the rite re-asserts through the symbolic or metaphorical meaning these acts have acquired by constant repetition over centuries. (61)

By contrast, in Arrufat's contemporary *Los siete contra Tebas*, Polinice is forgiven and partially accepted back into society, and buried alongside his brother. This act of humanity despite the contemporary society's fear of the Barbarian demonstrates that this contemporary society deals with the social conflict differently than the Aeschylean society. Xenophobia of the foreigner was not the driving force of contemporary Thebes' actions which is significant considering that doubt and fear of the foreigner still hover over the city. The contemporary Chorus apprehensively states its concerns that, "Veo a los guerreros enemigos... me suda la frente" (Arrufat 31). In spite of this, however, the Chorus reveals that the contemporary society represented in Arrufat's drama is dealing less with the social conflict of a foreigner, and more distressed over, "¿cuál de nuestros hijos regresará... del fratricidio?" (Arrufat 67). In their view, although Polinice left and abandoned them, he is still a son of Thebes. Polinice may be different, but his memory remains with his fellow Thebans who knew him.

After both brothers have fallen in battle, the Chorus laments, "doble infortunio, soledad doble" (Arrufat 74), desiring that, "Vuélvete, Etéocles. Vuélvete, Polinice" (Arrufat 74). The Chorus expresses no fear or hatred of the fallen foreigner, but rather proclaims elevated human concern, that of "de todo cuanto vale en la vida" (Arrufat 68). The Theban society, above all, cherishes the human life more than it fears that which is foreign, a key difference between the Aeschylean and contemporary societies of Thebes. Thus, the contemporary Polinice partially fulfills the final phase of reintegration because of this view. Arrufat's play ends on an optimistic tone that advocates for the total reintegration between Thebans who have left Thebes and those who have not.

Dramatic Analysis of the Symbolism of Blood

The plays' symbolic use of, and many references to, "blood" is instructive in defining and revealing each society's perception of the Barbarian. This view is the determining factor in how that society deals with the social conflict created by Polinice(s)' return and substantiates the degree of reintegration permitted by society in each play. In both dramas, Eté(e)ocles and Polinice(s) are brothers, blood relatives, and that common factor should bind them together and provide a common ground upon which their relationship is based. All those who are born and raised as Thebans are brothers as well.

Just as the blood relationship binds Eté(e)ocles and Polinice(s) together, Thebans are bound together similarly by the love for their country and its traditions. This love of one's country runs through the veins of all Thebans just as blood runs through the veins of the brothers, Eté(e)ocles and Polinice(s). Just as the blood is the physical element that Eté(e)ocles and Polinice(s) share in common, love for one's country is the spiritual blood that all countrymen, including Thebans, share in common. Blood, therefore, is the life force that binds together every Theban mind, body and soul, unifying the entire populace of Thebes in, "un acalorado tema sociopolítico de envergadura épica" (*Teatro y revolución cubana* 62). This thematic symbolism of blood parallels Polinice(s)' journey and climaxes at his return to his home society of Thebes. His degree of fulfillment of Turner's final phase of reintegration, partial or none, can be understood upon examining the symbolism of blood in each play.

In the Aeschylean play, Polinices' native Theban society fails to recognize his Greek blood at his return; they see a Barbarian, not a Greek. Eteocles, Polinices' biological brother, also fails to recognize Polinices; he sees an enemy, not a brother. When Polinices mingled

among the Barbarians he polluted the purity of his Hellenistic culture with Barbarian ideas and his Greek veins with “su sangre... de los argivos” (Aeschylus 65). Polinices’ ideological transfusion caused by his journey and experiences makes him foreign—a Barbarian. Theban society views the Barbarians as biologically, ideologically and culturally different from all Greeks. Fear of, “su sangre de su corazón de hierro, inflamado de valentía” (Aeschylus 73), causes Eteocles to declare that only hate binds us to each other and that he will maintain, “purificación para esta sangre” (Aeschylus 877-878). For the secluded and consequently fearful Thebes, Polinices’ transfusion of ideas is equivalent to a blood transfusion using the wrong blood type, and thus it is fatal. He is no longer the man who was born among them, sharing their Greek blood and Hellenistic culture. Therefore, the Aeschylean society deals with the social conflict of a returning Polinices in the same manner as they do all Barbarians; Polinices is the enemy, and thus, “The ritual and social situation of the drama thus sets up a powerful tension between the fictional and the actual rite and between character and audience that is essential to Greek tragedy and possibly to all tragedy” (Segal 69).

The Aeschylean society deals with this social conflict by calling upon the Greek goddess Athena, “madre antigua de nuestra raza, protégenos, pues hemos nacido de tu sangre” (Aeschylus 188). They have faith in Greek blood. Since Greek blood determines your alliances (and your enemies) they trust in Athena to, “lo apartará de la nidada como a serpiente horrible” (Aeschylus 635-655). This compares Polinices, a human being of warm blood, to a cold-blooded reptile. Here Polinices’ native society suggests that his transfusion of experiences and ideas during his journey genetically mutated him from a mammal to a reptile. Polinices’ claims and exclamations that, “llama a los dioses gentilicios de la tierra paterna... de su raza” (Aeschylus

852-854), and of his blood fall on deaf ears. Reintegration is not a possibility. It does not matter that “Polinices [still] prays like a Theban... calling on the native gods of Thebes, much as Eteocles does” (Thalman 53).

By contrast, in Arrufat’s contemporary drama, “the persistent theme of blood” (Thalman 50), reinforces the play’s proposal of a more optimistic view in which partial reintegration is permitted and total reintegration may be possible in the future. This contemporary society of Thebes still exists isolated from the world of the Barbarians, but their recognition and partial reacceptance of a blood brother at his return indicate that they recognize family above their fear of the foreigners approaching, coming from the “campo enemigo... con las manos ensangrentadas” (Arrufat 29). The society of Thebes quivers and shakes, crying, “mi pecho palpita, mi sangre se quema” (Arrufat 27) at Polinice, “con las manos ensangrentadas todavía” (Arrufat 29), who is, “armado un ejército de extranjeros, se acerca a sitiar nuestra ciudad” (Arrufat 27). The society of Thebes is perplexed: A man among that Barbaric race is Greek. Theban society recognizes, “mi propio hermano Polinice... [que] ni entregarse al recuerdo de su propia sangre, olvidando los días compartidos, la hermandad de la infancia, el hogar paterno” (Arrufat 27). The society of Thebes assumes that Polinice’s journey, experiences, and transfusion of ideas has washed his brain, stolen his memory and infected his heart. The perilous outside has polluted his allegiances. However, even though Polinice dies outside of the walls of Thebes, his identity is acknowledged, and he does enter the city to talk with his brother first because the recognition of Greek blood is stronger than fear of the Barbarian.

After the victorious battle preserving Theban security, the society mourns in near repentance for spilling the blood of a brother, that “...sangre cuajada y negra, sangre del fratricidio” (Arrufat 66). For this contemporary society, the blood of brotherhood is always recognized and respected. Polinice was born Greek, and he died Greek. The society portrayed in Arrufat’s drama shows human concerns, always loyal to the common blood of their own family and their own society. Blood is the biological and spiritual unification of a civilization. In the context of the political allegory this position appears to be consistent with Arrufat’s view of the Cuban revolution and particularly the battle at the Bay of Pigs which pitted Cuban brother against Cuban brother. According to Torrance, “Arrufat’s LSCT is not an outright condemnation of either brother or either side. What it does condemn is fratricidal war...” (308).

Therefore, regardless of their past experiences, both brothers are buried side by side. Both are honored with ceremonial rites and laid to rest next to the Fathers of Thebes because both Etéocles and Polinice are, “nombres de nuestra sangre... nombres de Tebas” (Arrufat 70), and were blood brothers to Theban society. The play’s “emphasis on common fate, common blood, and common heritage” (Thalman 21), and the importance of humanity brought to life by this contemporary society of Ancient Greece magnifies that the human concern is greatest.

To ensure its survival, the contemporary society of Thebes rejected the changed man who walked among them, and killed the Barbarian. However, unlike in the Aeschylean drama, Polinice was recognized as a blood brother. He was honored with mourning and ceremonial rights. Given that of all the artistic activities, theatre is “the most immediately responsive to social change because it depends directly on society for its existence” (Palls 464), the tone of the play is optimistic because total reintegration is only a half a step further from partial

reintegration. This closed society of the contemporary Thebes has changed ever so slightly from the time of Aeschylus to permit a partial reintegration and that society has survived. Perhaps, one day soon, it will change enough to allow for a full reintegration of a blood brother returning home from abroad.

Conclusions

Arrufat's contemporary drama is a complex and fascinating literary work. Through the use of political allegory, Arrufat draws striking parallels to the Cuban revolution (which vaulted Castro onto the international stage and ultimately into a position of absolute power in Cuba), the Bay of Pigs invasion, and the conflict and turmoil experienced by Cuban society during that tumultuous era. By diverging ever so slightly from the original Greek text and by adding emphasis through the use of dramatic elements, Arrufat sheds more light on Etéocles and his motives while simultaneously introducing Polinice as a real character with a voice and motives of his own. Through these techniques, Arrufat masterfully presents the conflict in a more balanced way. Both sides of the quarrel are clearly presented directly to the audience, rather than by hearsay, and consequently, the spectators receive more information with which to evaluate the struggle that plays out before them between the brothers. Arrufat's skillful work makes it rather easy for the spectator to perceive that the conflict between Etéocles and Polinice is, in fact, his own conflict. The political allegory that is played out on the stage represents the conflict facing Cuban society during and after the Cuban revolution and the fratricidal war that ensued as the Castro dictatorship assumed absolute dictatorial powers and refused to tolerate any voice of dissent.

One can further examine the Cuban conflict revealed in the political allegory by viewing that conflict through an anthropological lens. Arrufat's play clearly demonstrates the rites of passage journey through its protagonist, Polinice. The exile of Polinice at the hands of Etéocles (separation), Polinice's sojourn in a foreign land among the Argives (liminality), and Polinice's subsequent return with a foreign army to take back his property and place of authority in

Thebes (reintegration or not) provides the basis for the three phases in Turner's rites of passage journey. Upon his return, however, Arrufat's Polinice is given a voice and permitted to argue his case on stage before the audience, and the Chorus is allowed to express their fears and mixed emotions toward Polinice—viewing him simultaneously as the enemy (or a Barbarian) and also as their brother and fellow Theban (or a Greek). As the drama plays out, the characters and their flaws, virtues, motives and emotions are more apparent not only to the Chorus, as evidenced by its response, but also to the audience. Gradually, what had initially been perceived as black and white—or Greek vs. Barbarian—is no longer quite so clear.

Though Polinice was killed in battle by the Theban army, the burial of his body within the walls of Thebes alongside his brother represents a new phase in the rites of passage journey—that of partial reintegration. Although Polinice was slain in battle as a Barbarian, he was buried as a brother, as a Greek. Contemporary Theban society was not prepared to completely deny him reintegration into his own society nor was it prepared to fully reintegrate him. That Arrufat's contemporary society struggled greatly with this conflict is apparent and results in the decision to partially reintegrate Polinice back into society by receiving his corpse back into the city for burial with full honors next to his deceased brother, Étéocles. Thus, partial reintegration is clearly established as an additional phase in Turner's rites of passage journey. In fact, it is the position of this thesis that partial reintegration is a critical phase in the rites of passage journey because it can be used to bridge the gap between the two absolutes of no reintegration and full reintegration and thus move a society forward by accepting and embracing positive change.

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