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ENGL 1302 TR 10.50-12.05

December 1, 2011

Can Disobedience Be Justified By Family Allegiance?

Society is constantly required to adapt and evolve in accordance with the changes followed by significant events in history. Yet, despite the inevitable progression of society and cultures, the stress and significance placed on values—especially those regarding the importance of family—these continually remain at the core of society's foundation. The idea of a family unit has always served as the most basic form of community. It is within these family units that its members learn their roles and expectations that later transfer into their daily life once they are introduced and involved in the outer communities, which surround them. Upon learning their roles as a family member and as a member of society, one is also introduced to their family's core values by way of their actions. These values not only shape one's moral character but also serve as the basis on which they chose their actions. What could be argued, as one of the most treasured and emphasized values throughout history is that one must always place the good of the family before all else. History has always shown us the strength and power a family can hold, thus the idea of always placing family before others often goes undisputed. This notion of "family first" is especially prevalent in both Edgar Allan Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado" and Sophocles' *Antigone*, where the protagonists of these significant pieces of literature justify their actions, which break the common law set forth by their mortal leaders, under the pretense that they are committing such crimes for the sake of maintaining family allegiance. By establishing a sense of family ties and obligation among the characters, the authors are showing that the true motivations of both Montresor and Antigone are not to do what is knowingly wrong, but to instead, right what has already been wronged—an action that would result in harsh punishment. Yet, it is this motivation which seeps through their works and allows the reader to sympathize with these characters; before the protagonists commit their crimes, the reader must suffer alongside Montresor and Antigone during the periods in which they claim to have been wrong, and it is only after they have suffered that we learn of their resulting actions, which in turn are seen as less satanic and more remorseful and empathic.