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□ E Conflict is the basis of the two literary works we studied in class: Maus by Art Spiegelman and Antigone by Sophocles. Although the novels are set apart by a wide time difference—Maus written in the 1990's and Antigone in 441 b.c.—they share the common theme of human struggle and the attempts to resolve those conflicts. Maus and Antigone both portray family, political ~~so~~ religious, political, ~~3~~ family ~~so~~ conflicts with little resolution throughout their storylines.

Maus and Antigone are both literary works centered around the one of the main themes of religious conflict, and how it affects both individuals and society as a whole. Maus, for instance, is Art Spiegelman's retelling of his father's account of the Holocaust, ^{which was} a hideous persecution of the race of Jews by the German Nazis. This caused a conflict that not only affected involved the Jewish race, but their society as a whole (even other nations) by leading to an inevitable choosing of sides—the Nazis, who believed Jews were a subhuman race, or the Jews, unjustly having to fight for their lives. Thus, the Holocaust that is featured in Maus showcases this significant religious conflict as mainly unresolved because of the strong belief beliefs on each side. We as the reader don't really see a resolution, but rather a ~~con~~ solution achieved by force. Vladek, Spiegelman's father, eventually escapes the camps, but even this is not a complete resolution, because he has to use a pig mask to hide his race of a ~~at~~ mouse (who represent the Jews) so that he won't be caught by those still prejudiced his kind. It shows that even though the Allies eventually beat Hitler (who committed suicide), Jews still face racism based on their religion, ~~3~~ the conflict was never fully resolved in ~~that~~ Vladek's story.

Antigone was also centered around a religious conflict, as



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Antigone, the heroine of the story, defies Creon's edict to leave Polynices unburied as a traitor to the city. Unlike Maus, where the characters never directly meet or even see the man responsible for their suffering, Antigone is centered on following a few main characters, thus allowing Antigone and Creon to meet face to face to fight for their religious beliefs. However, this still does ~~it~~^{not} lead to a full resolution of the conflict. Creon is enraged that Antigone would dare defy his orders as king to leave Polynices unburied, because he believes that he rules by divine right; therefore, it is sacrilegious to disobey him. Antigone on the other hand, holds primary belief in the laws of the gods, & carries less faith in the power of the laws of man. Creon then orders Antigone to be buried alive. Creon eventually changed his mind, highlighting the contrast between her static character & Creon's dynamic character, but by the time he ~~goes~~^{went} to save Antigone, she had already hung herself. Thus, the conflict remains unsolved because Antigone, true to her resolute character, decided she would rather die by her own hand than Creon's misguided sense of justice, & Creon, led astray by the overwhelming power of tyranny, was not in time to reach peace. Her death highlighted the terrible effect of the religious conflict by also leading to the deaths of her fiancé, Haemon, & his mother. Thus, the conflict remained unsolved & created an even worse situation as divine retribution for Creon.

Maus and Antigone both also revolved around political conflict, & ~~how~~^{shows} ~~that~~ the tyrannical rule of one affects society ^{specifically} & individuals within society. In Antigone, Creon, leader of the city, takes advantage of his power to put himself in a position he believes equal to the gods by ordering Polynices, a traitor, to remain unburied. As discussed before, when Antigone goes against his orders, he continues his tyrannical reign by ordering her death. Thus, the political conflict



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of Antigone is based on the blindness of evil tyranny. This conflict is somewhat resolved, because although Creon does eventually change his mind, it is only after he has been beseeched by his son Haemon, Tiresius the blind prophet, and the leader of the chorus. Thus And it is too late to save Antigone by the time he does change his mind. Thus, the conflict shows how tyranny creates isolation of thought with a fortification too strong & influential on the mind to break crack through easily.

In Maus, the political conflict is quite similar to that of Antigone; Hitler manipulates his power tyrannically to use it to his advantage & create a superior race. Hitler's purpose is made especially clear to the reader through Spiegelman's representation of Jews as mice, and Nazis as cats... who in real life, eat mice. The theme that tyranny blinds is again reflected in this work as Hitler's power spread to amazing distance, even leading races the Nazis also believed to be inferior to follow him (such as the British) in order to survive gain power for themselves to survive. If one can say a resolution was reached, it was only through force that it was achieved, considering Hitler committed suicide when it was clear he lost the war & reparations from Germany only came by the power of the Allies.

Finally, both literary works also portrayed the conflict between family; one of the most powerful since it fights between such strong bonds. In Antigone, Antigone battles with her sister Ismene & her uncle Creon, & Creon fights with his son Haemon. Antigone, in the beginning of the story, beseeches Ismene ^{as her "blood sister"} to aid her in burying their brother only to be refused by her sister, who fears the wrath of Creon's edict. This is the ultimate betrayal to Antigone, who puts the importance of her duties to the gods & thus her family, above any laws of man. That Ismene doesn't



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Follow this way of life makes her less than important to Antigone, which we can see by Antigone's harsh diction later in the play when she refuses ~~any~~ Ismene any contribution to her crime, even if it could potentially lessen her sentence, or at least give her a familiar ally. This conflict is never resolved as Antigone dies having refused her sister's help, a key point to her resolute character. Antigone also fights with her uncle Creon, who cites her relation to her father Oedipus as the reason for her combative spirit. They both refuse to listen to the other, strongly believing that their own beliefs are correct & that the other is an insult to the gods. This conflict is also not resolved, since Creon realizes the error of his ways too late to save Antigone. Creon also battles with his son, who tries to convince his father of the error of his tyrannical ways. Creon refuses to listen to him though, maintaining a father figure role that knows more than his son. This conflict is also left unresolved since Haemon kills himself after Antigone hangs herself.

There are two plotlines in Maus, one following Vladek's account of the Holocaust, and the other following the present day relationship between Spiegelman and his father. Their relationship is full of tension as they struggle with their generation gap that leaves them critical of the other & with little understanding. Spiegelman can't understand why his father is so frugal despite his wealth and also resents the competition he faces with his dead apost brother, Richieu. They both also mourn the loss of Anja, Vladek's wife & Spiegelman's mother, who was significantly important to the both of them & whose absence leads to further rift between them, Spiegelman even calling his father a murderer for throwing away Anja's diaries. Although Vladek recounting his time during the Holocaust



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may have created a little more peace between them, their conflict essentially remains unsolved, when, on the last page, right before Wladek dies, he calls Spiegelman by his dead brother's name, Pichiel, leaving a tone of sad hopelessness at the end.

Therefore, Maus and Antigone both portray the struggles humanity faces, ~~with the life~~ specifically through the religious, political, ~~and family~~ conflicts, and the little success achieved in resolving them.



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