

A Comprehensive Study Guide: Aeschylus' Seven Against Thebes

Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes* is a powerful and moving tragedy that explores the themes of fate, destiny, and the destructive consequences of war. Written in the 5th century BC, the play tells the story of the seven heroes who lead an attack on Thebes to avenge the death of their father.



Study Guide for Aeschylus's Seven against Thebes

by Dawn Beacon

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

Language : English

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Screen Reader : Supported



This study guide provides a comprehensive overview of the play, including a plot summary, character analysis, and exploration of its themes and motifs. It also offers insightful critical analysis and a discussion of the literary devices used by Aeschylus to create a compelling and thought-provoking drama.

Plot Summary

The play begins with the city of Thebes under siege by the seven heroes, led by Polynices, the exiled son of Oedipus. The Thebans, led by Eteocles, Polynices' brother, are determined to defend their city.

As the battle rages, the seven heroes are each killed in turn by a Theban champion. Finally, Polynices and Eteocles face each other in single combat. Both brothers are killed, and the play ends with the city of Thebes in mourning.

Characters

- **Eteocles:** The king of Thebes, Eteocles is a strong and determined leader who is willing to sacrifice his own life to protect his city.
- **Polynices:** Polynices is the exiled son of Oedipus who leads the attack on Thebes. He is a passionate and ambitious man who is driven by a desire for revenge.
- **Antigone:** Antigone is the sister of Polynices and Eteocles. She is a loyal and loving daughter who is torn between her duty to her family and her duty to her city.
- **Ismene:** Ismene is the sister of Antigone and Polynices. She is a timid and cautious woman who is afraid of the consequences of opposing her brother.
- **Creon:** Creon is the uncle of Antigone, Polynices, and Eteocles. He is a wise and experienced man who is called upon to rule Thebes after the death of Eteocles.

Themes and Motifs

- **Fate and Destiny:** The play explores the idea that fate is inevitable and that humans are powerless to change their destiny.
- **The Destructive Consequences of War:** The play shows the devastating effects of war on both the victors and the vanquished.

- **Family and Loyalty:** The play explores the complex relationships between family members and the conflicts that can arise between loyalty to one's family and loyalty to one's city.
- **Pride and Hubris:** The play shows how pride and hubris can lead to tragedy.

Critical Analysis

Seven Against Thebes is a complex and challenging play that has been the subject of much critical analysis. Some critics have argued that the play is a pessimistic work that shows the futility of human effort in the face of fate. Others have argued that the play is a more hopeful work that shows the possibility of redemption through suffering.

The play has also been praised for its powerful language and imagery. Aeschylus uses vivid and evocative language to create a sense of atmosphere and to convey the emotions of the characters. The play also contains several memorable speeches, such as Eteocles' speech to the Theban army and Polynices' speech to his followers.

Literary Devices

Aeschylus uses a variety of literary devices to create a compelling and thought-provoking drama. These devices include:

- **Imagery:** Aeschylus uses vivid and evocative imagery to create a sense of atmosphere and to convey the emotions of the characters.
- **Symbolism:** Aeschylus uses symbols to represent abstract ideas and concepts. For example, the seven gates of Thebes represent the seven heroes who attack the city.

- **Irony:** Aeschylus uses irony to create dramatic tension and to highlight the tragic fate of the characters.
- **Suspense:** Aeschylus builds suspense by withholding information from the audience and by creating a sense of foreboding.

Seven Against Thebes is a powerful and moving tragedy that explores the timeless themes of fate, destiny, and the destructive consequences of war. It is a challenging and rewarding play that offers insights into the human condition.

This study guide has provided a comprehensive overview of the play, including a plot summary, character analysis, and exploration of its themes and motifs. It has also offered insightful critical analysis and a discussion of the literary devices used by Aeschylus to create a compelling and thought-provoking drama.

We hope that this study guide will help you to better understand and appreciate *Seven Against Thebes*. We encourage you to read the play for yourself and to explore its many layers of meaning.



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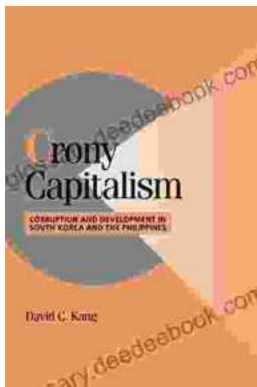
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