

With war comes the uprise and highlight of many different social issues and values. Set in a time of war, the novel A Separate Peace makes reference to a number of these. Like this novel, the Theban play Antigone also contains a plethora of displays of society's troubles as well as morals and ethics.

Of course, war itself is a very prominent social issue in A Separate Peace. The story takes place in the very midst of a raging war. The main characters, Gene and Phineas, or Finny, are attending the Devon school for boys. All around them, war is present, even though they are safe and secluded from the front lines. Boys enrolled in grades above them, not even a whole year older than them, are being trucked away in packs. Off to build their strength and train to fight off the enemy. In fact, one of their own close friends, Leper Lepellier, is encouraged to enlist and does so, only to return later suffering from near insanity provoked by the war he had seen.

The war is also brought into Gene's everyday play with his friends. Jumping from a large tree near the river was proof that you were strong enough to be a soldier. Even a childish ball game took on the properties of war – "Blitzball" became a fun way to imitate fighting to the death.

While war is also ranging throughout Antigone, a more well-noted issue of society is the role of women. The body of Polynices has been condemned to rot above ground as punishment for a crime he has committed. When Antigone confronts her sister Ismene for aid in giving their brother a proper burial, Ismene refuses to do so. Her excuse? That she is a woman and therefore not capable. "I am but a woman. I am not strong enough." It is troubling to think that this woman is unwilling to even help, not because what Antigone proposes she do is a crime against the word of the King, but only because she was born a female. The views of the rest of society have caused Ismene to accept and believe that she cannot be all that she wants because of her gender.

The views of the Greek society on women's roles are apparent through King Creon's anger upon learning that Antigone has succeeded in burying her brother's remains, he is enraged ten times more that she is a woman and has risen against him. When first told of the crime committed, Creon assumes the villain is a male, using masculine pronouns in reference to him. But when told by the messenger that it was Antigone – a woman – his anger rises and he clearly states that this is because of her sex. This social issue continues to appear in numerous spots throughout the play.

Values are as well discussed in these two works. A value portrayed in A Separate Peace is honesty. Gene's conscience bothers him throughout the entire novel as he tries to deal with knowing that he was the cause of Phineas' injury. While playing games, jumping from a tree, Gene shook the tree Phineas was perched in, causing him to fall and break his leg. Gene does not admit this until the very end of the novel. The shock makes Phineas angry and disoriented and when he storms away, he stumbles over a flight of stairs. This worsens his injury, resulting in his death. As all this is linked to Gene's initial act of horseplay at the tree, Gene is responsible for the loss of life. If Gene had been honest with Phineas about what he had done beforehand, at a better time, not only would his nagging conscience been cleared, he could have prevented the death. Honesty is an important value in any society.

Antigone shows the values held by the Greeks of their religion and respect for their gods. Leaving Polynices' body to rot was such a brutal punishment because it was believed that without proper burial rituals, the gods would not take him into the afterlife. Fear of the gods is also shown when the insistence of the prophet Teresius convinces Creon to relax the charge he has placed on Antigone for burying Polynices. Teresius says that the gods are happy with what she has done. The fact that Creon would lift such a charge on the words of a blind prophet and that such a man was given more respect than the King himself shows just how much importance was placed on religion in this place and era.

As you can see, social issues and values are definitely given a large role in this novel and play. Both are quality-enriched by the themes, the presence of these subjects provide. They make relating the story to our own everyday lives much easier. Social issues and values have much importance and should be stressed as they offer insight into how to mold one's life for the better.