

Work Cited

Sophocles. Antigone. Trans. Richard Emil Braun. Oxford University Press. 1973.

Antigone and Kreon

The accepted wisdom of a culture is most accurately, and most often, reflected in the constructive efforts of its general population. Most artisans, authors and historians of Ancient Greece, for example, convey in their art and literature the norms of everyday life in Ancient Greece. The play **Antigone** by Sophocles is one of the most distinguished pieces of theatrical work that reflects upon Greek mythology and culture.

Antigone has several themes and circumstantial settings that can be indirectly referred or related to in modern society. Sophocles uses various and strategically placed characters to present his play as well as his themes. Sophocles develops a character in his play **Antigone** that is the definition of brave and courageous. Being brave is tough. It takes a lot of courage and strength to do something that you believe in, to be an individual. Antigone is not only the name of the play but also is a character in the play. Antigone is an individual because she stands up for what she believes is right, even though it may go against the laws created.

Antigone and Kreon battle a philosophical war based on their beliefs of what is right and wrong. The conflict arose when the principles that backed up their actions clashed with each other, making it a contradiction between morals. Antigone's side of the conflict held a much more heavenly approach, as opposed to the immoral road that Kreon chose to follow.

Antigone, faced with the burial of her brother, Polyneices, displays a wide array of emotions towards Kreon. Antigone is portrayed as a woman acting out of obligation and duty, to the gods, her family, and her conscience. She faces overwhelming odds and incredible hardships for doing what she knew was right, which was what led her to

her own death. Kreon is to blame for this tragedy because of his insecurity, his insensitivity, and his stubbornness. Kreon is arrogant in thinking it is acceptable to use his position of power to deny the wishes of the gods. Kreon's regard for the laws of the city causes him to abandon all other beliefs. He feels that all should obey the laws set forth by him, even if other beliefs, moral or religious, state otherwise.

Antigone herself charges Kreon with this fact, "The laws that they have made for men are well marked out. I don't suppose you decree that stronger enough, or you, who are human, to violate the lawful traditions the gods have not written merely, but made inflexible" (554-559).

Kreon's suffering at the conclusion of the play is a direct result of his excessive pride, or did the gods punish him outright for making a decree that went against their code of behavior for mortals? Antigone's association of the gods with family has been established; Kreon's concordance with this view has as well. On this matter, they agree. However, Kreon's power is threatened, not by a god, but by a woman. To be threatened by a god, a divine being with supernatural powers beyond the comprehension of man, would indeed be palatable to him. To be threatened not only by a woman, an inferior being in and of itself, but one who is his niece, the daughter of a sibling is a direct attack on the king's manhood as well as his ego. The rage he feels proves that he perceives family bonds to be of utmost significance, for he takes very negatively to the idea that those who are the most rebellious are the ones who are supposed to be his most loyal followers, as they are connected by a family bond.

The contradictions between the beliefs of Kreon and Antigone are strong throughout the play. Both have well-structured arguments, but neither completely dominates the other. Both sides were just; all beliefs were supported. Kreon was forced to decide the

unanswerable, decipher the encoded, complete the impossible, and determine right from wrong when there was no clear answer.

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By: Sarah Pinsonneault

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