

# Literary analysis

Literature



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Gender Roles in Antigone by Sophocles of Learning Gender Roles in Antigone by Sophocles Antigone is one of the most famous works by ancient Greek writer Sophocles. The issue of gender roles are of particular interest since each of the characters demonstrates his/her attitude to gender issues. The play introduces the concepts of gender roles represented in ancient Greek society. In particular, the woman is seen as the keeper of the hearth, who must obey her husband. Men have much more rights and opportunities than women do. For this reason, the act of Antigone has particularly serious consequences, since as a woman she dares to go against the conventional laws (Jacobs, 1996).

Despite the ban to bury the soldiers who participated in the battle against their hometown and country, Antigone cannot follow this law. She believes that her duty is to bury her brother. It should be noted that this does not violate the terms of Antigone's gender role as a woman, since "it was clearly women's role in 5th Century Athens to care for the dead" (Leibman 1997). However, Antigone objects to the male authority in the person of Creon. "By refusing to be passive, she overturns one of the fundamental rules of her culture" ("Antigone by Sophocles," n. d.) That is why her sister Ismene warns of the consequences of this transgression:

You ought to realize we are only women,  
nor meant in nature to fight against men,  
and that we are ruled, by those who are stronger,  
to obedience in this and even more painful matters....

Extravagant action is not sensible (as cited in Leibman, 1997).

Thus, the play depicts the patriarchal foundations of Greek society. Woman is obliged to follow the rules in relation to women's rights and duties.

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Violation of these regulations threatens even death for women. Antigone is forced to break the patriarchal foundations of their society, because she has to fulfill her duty.

#### References

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