

Struggle between antigone and creon in sophocles' antigone

[Literature](#), [Play](#)



Antigone Antigone, by Sophocles, is a story about the struggle between Antigone, who represents the laws of the gods and Creon, who represents the laws of the state. The play takes place circa 442 B. C. in the city-state of Thebes. The story revolves around the burial of Polyneices. Polyneices led an army against his brother, Etocles, the King of Thebes. They killed each other in battle and the new king, Creon, made a decree that only Etocles was to be buried because Polyneices was his rival. Antigone, sister of Polyneices and Etocles, feels that she needs to bury Polyneices in accordance to Zeus' law, but this went against Creon's decree. Also, Antigone has to bury Polyneices without the help of her sister Ismene. Since Antigone decided to follow Zeus' law, which states that all bodies must be buried, she defied Creon's decree and buried Polyneices anyway. Caught by the guards, while burying her brother, Antigone was sent to a rocky chamber as punishment by Creon. Creon's son, Haemon, was engaged to marry Antigone, but he along with the rest of the city thought Antigone's death was unjust. Even after Teirsias, the blind prophet, warned Creon to release Antigone and bury Polyneices, Creon remained reluctant. Finally, Teirsias told Creon that the gods were going to punish him and Creon became worried. By the time he got to the rocky chamber, it was too late: Antigone already hung herself. Creon found his son sobbing next to her and when he told Haemon to come back with him, Haemon spat in his face and pulled out his sword. In the struggle to save Haemon, Creon opened the way for Haemon to impale himself. After Creon's wife, Eurydice, found out her son was dead, she stabbed herself to death. Creon is not wholly wrong in forbidding people to bury Polyneices. His intentions are good because he wanted to show how evil Polyneices was in

attacking the city and that in order for the government of Thebes to work, they have to stay united. According to Creon, " For I- be Zeus my witness, who sees all things always- would not be silent if I saw ruin, instead of safety, coming to the citizens; nor would I ever deem the country's foes a friend to myself; remembering this, that our country is the ship that bears us safe, and that only while she prospers in our voyage can we make true friends"(Sophocles, page 121). Creon justifies his position to the others in the play by stating that Polyneices was evil and it would be unjust to Etocles, who died with honor, to share a spot in the earth with an evil person like Polyneices.(Sophocles, page 129). Creon states, " ...Polyneices, who came back from exile and sought to consume utterly with fire the city of his fathers and the shrines of his fathers' gods, sought to taste of kindred blood and to lead the remnant into slavery..."(Sophocles, page 121). Creon also states, " A foe is never a friend-not even in death"(Sophocles, page 129). I think Antigone is a righteous martyr for wanting to bury her brother. She paid the funeral rights to her brother and followed the laws of the gods. Even though, Creon's decree went against the laws of the gods, Antigone followed Zeus' law and did what was right. She died for the righteous cause, which makes her a martyr. Antigone's justification for breaking the law to bury her brother is that it is better to follow Zeus' law and be good in the eyes of the gods than to follow Creon's law and be bad in the eyes of the gods because Creon is no match for the gods. Antigone says that she was acting in justice. When Creon asks Antigone if she broke the law, she replies, " Yes, for it was not Zeus that had published that edict; not such are the laws set among men by the Justice who dwells with the gods below"(Sophocles, page 127). There is

an element of self-destructiveness in Antigone's opposition to Creon. She knows that she is going to die, but she will die knowing that what she did was just and that she will go to Heaven because she did as the gods wanted. She is not scared of death because she is ready for Heaven. She mortally self-destructed but morally preserved herself. The final outcome of the conflict is that Antigone dies, but when Creon's son, Haemon, found out and was crying next to her hanging body in the rocky chamber, his father came to tell him to tell him to come back with him. Haemon kills himself by pulling out his sword and impaling himself on it. Creon tried to stop him but it was too late. When Creon's wife, Eurydice, finds out her son is dead, she goes home and stabs herself to death. With Antigone's loss of life, she gains Heaven and goodness with the gods. For Creon's stubbornness, he loses his son and wife. He is forced to live the rest of his life without them and worse, the gods are upset with him. Sophocles' Antigone shows the moral dilemma between loyalty to the gods or loyalty to the state. Antigone was more "right" than Creon because it is better to follow the laws of the gods. Antigone's respect for the laws of the gods earned her a right to Heaven since she died a noble death trying to carry out their will. However, Creon was forced to live the rest of his life without his family as punishment for his stubbornness. I would follow the laws of the gods because they are more powerful. Even Creon who represented the laws of the state was not above the punishment of the gods; his hubris brought on the gods' punishment. Antigone, who took her own life proved she was above the laws of the state and therefore more "right" by following the gods' laws. Bibliography Antigone.