

Literary analysis of antigone



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Antigone The general idea of the tragedy “ Antigone” is the prohibition of the burial of Polyneices by Creon and how Antigone defied his order. Because of Antigone’s refusal to follow Creon’s order, she is locked in prison where she committed suicide. Out of despair, Haemon, Antigone’s fiance and Eurydice, Creon’s wife kills herself too. Several themes were presented in the drama. The central theme is the tension between fate and free will. Although it was Antigone’s decision to defy Creon, fate was still responsible for the tragic events of the trilogy. Another theme depicted is the two types of law and justice which are the divine laws and the laws of men. The determination of the characters was also portrayed in Antigone, Creon and Ismene. A social drama was also presented regarding the issues of gender and the law. The issue of mortality is another theme in this trilogy, as shown in the suicides of Antigone, Haemon and Eurydice. Antigone is the daughter of Oedipus and niece of Creon and the fiance of Haemon. She is the protagonist and tragic heroine in this play. Her character exemplifies one of fierce devotion to her family and loyalty to the gods. She buries her brother, Polyneices thereby disobeying Creon’s order. Her hamartia or tragic flaw in her character is her stubborn loyalty to her family and the gods that brings her to her tragic death. Antigone’s character is also a symbol of the feminine revolt. Despite Ismene’s explanation that they are just women and therefore should not go against men, Antigone still insisted in burying Polyneices. Creon is the king of Thebes and the uncle of Antigone. Creon is the absolute tyrant and the antagonist in the play. He favors the rational laws of man as opposed to the laws of the gods. His hamartia or tragic error is his stubborn allegiance to the laws of man. His hubris or pride is also a flaw in his character. Because of his pride, he refused to listen to the blind prophet Teiresias who warned him

about the death of his whole family. Creon's arrogance can be observed in his manner of talking to Teiresias. In this drama however, although Creon is considered the antagonist, he cannot be considered a villain. He was considered a fierce leader but during that time it was what Thebes really needed because the state just came from a state of anarchy. It should also be pointed out that it was Antigone's disobedience to the law that disturbed Thebes and not Creon. This is also the reason why we can consider Creon as the protagonist because in Aristotle's concepts, Creon is the one who experienced peripeteia or a reversal of fortune. After the death of his family, he also experienced anagnorisis or a recognition of the mistake he committed. Antigone and Creon represent various opposing forces such as man's laws vs. laws of gods, male vs. female and family ties vs. civic duties. The play shows the difference in the character motivation of Antigone and Creon. While Antigone is motivated by her loyalty to family and the gods, Creon is motivated by the laws of the state. Antigone is considered to be the foil of Creon because they contradict each other in several issues. Whereas Creon expects men to have the primary role in society and women only a secondary citizen and has a subservient role, Antigone wants to prove that women can also be formidable against men. Their characters are so contrasting except that they are both portrayed as having determination and strength. In conclusion, the trilogy "Antigone" through its characterization presented major themes namely: pride and determination, divine law vs. human law and gender issues. The tone is generally tragic because of several deaths in the play. Again, the thesis statement is about how determined Antigone is to bury his brother because she values her family and the divine laws even if it means giving up her life.