

# Comparison of the roles of woman in the iliad vs antigone

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The role of the women in Antigone and the Iliad were completely contrary to each other. Women during the period of the Iliad weren't as independent as the women during the time period of Antigone. The women during the period of the Iliad were portrayed as objects. They were depicted as not being equivalent to the role of a man in society, even if they were royalty. In Antigone, the women had a little bit more liberation and enjoyed fairer treatment than that of the other epic.

In the Iliad, a woman's role depended more on her rank in the society and her value, in many ways, were reduced to her beauty. In Iliad, if a woman was married to a prince or a king, she was somewhat praised almost to the extent of a goddess. Though some women were held in high ranks, they were demeaned and degraded as we can see in the case of Helen when she was taken by a man.

Another example of this comes up again when Chryses approached Agamemnon and Menelaus and begged for the return of his daughter, " Yes, Chryses approached the Achaean's fast ships to win his daughter back, bringing a priceless ransom and bearing high in land, wound on a golden staff, the wreaths of the He begged the whole Achaean army but most of all the two supreme commanders, Atreus' two sons! May the gods who hold the halls of Olympus give you Priam's city to plunder, then safe passage home. And all the ranks of Achaeans cried out their assent: Respect the priest, accept the shining ransom!

But it brought no joy to the heart of Agamemnon. The king dismissed the priest with a brutal order ringing in his ear: " Never again, old man, let me

catch sight of you by the hollow ships! The staff and the wreaths of god will never save then. Long before that, old age will overtake her in my house, in Argos, far from her fatherland, slaving back and forth at the loom, forced to share my bed!"

This demonstrates that the women throughout this era were objects of entertainment and proprietorship. Though a ransom was offered by the father, Agamemnon only kept her just to show how powerful he was. And he degraded her to a low point by saying that she would be forced to share his bed and be a he would enslave her.

In Antigone, the women's roles began to transform and become more independent. This is evident in the act of defiance shown by Antigone when she buried her brother Polynices. Her uncle Creon established a law that prohibited everyone to not weep for or bury her slain brother. Antigone felt that this was unjust and requested her sister Ismene for assistance in their brother's burial. Ismene hesitated and didn't want to help as she was fearful of the consequences of going against Creon.

During the conversation, Antigone stated to Ismene, " I won't insist, no, even if you should have a change of heart, I'd never welcome you in labor, not with me. So, do as you like, whatever suits you best! " This one statement illustrates that at this time the women had started to be self-reliant and courageous. Because even if they were faced with threats of cruel punishments the women were prepared to break a law and defy power to fight for what they believed in. Antigone buried her brother even though it

would mean death to her. If she was found in action of the burial, she would be guilty of going against her uncle's crown.

In conclusion, the role of the women in the Iliad differed mainly because of the women's independence compared to that of Antigone. The role of women in Antigone showed more independence and determination. Women in the Iliad were more submissive and reliant on men in comparison with Antigone. And in Iliad, the women were treated merely as objects. But in Antigone, the women were shown with comparatively dignified character traits.