

The play antigone presents



The play Antigone presents the conflict between Antigone and king Creon. Antigone holds religious beliefs and respect of the dead while king Creon stood for the rule of law. Antigone made the choice to give her brother a proper burial after he was killed, hereby disobeying the orders of king Creon which eventually led to her death sentence.

Thoreau wrote in his essay If it [the injustice] is of such nature that it requires you to be the agent of injustice to another, then, I say, break the law (Thoreau). Although laws are created to be followed, sometimes people have to be civil disobedient to make revolutionary change in the world even if this means severe punishment, even death. Antigone is right to sacrifice her life for personal and religious beliefs as she creates revolutionary change; her story shows that civil disobedience can have negative consequences for the individual, but positive consequences for society.

Antigone decided to stand up for her beliefs and obeyed the rules of the gods while disobeying the law. Although she knew her brother Polynices betrayed his country and the king, Antigone gave him a respectful burial because she believed that was the right thing to do. Without a proper burial her brother would not go to heaven. Antigone didn't care about her own fate, all she cared about was standing up for the unjust ruling by the King, And if I die in the attempt, I shall die in the knowledge that I have acted justly (Sophocles page 7). Antigone believed that the will of the gods were more important than the laws of the state. Antigone lived in a time where women had no voice and were supposed to obey all men, but when Haemon said; Listen to the people in the streets, Father. The ordinary Thebans! They say she hasn't (Sophocles page 32), it showed that Thebes citizens didn't agree

with the king's ruling. Antigone didn't care to die for doing what she thought was right and hopefully, she didn't die in vain. When her sister Ismene tells her that she will keep their meeting secret, Antigone answers; Don't you dare! You must tell everybody, shout it in the streets (Sophocles page 8). Antigone shows here that she is ready for a revolution. The king regretted his decision to send Antigone to death after his son Haemon committed suicide. The chorus says; We have seen an old man, through suffering, become wise (Sophocles page 55). Antigone had to sacrifice her life but she made the correct decision because the King Creon became a better man.

King Creon has punished Antigone by sentencing her to death for the unlawful burial of her brother. Polynices tried to invade and take over the city of Thebes, which gave King Creon no other choice than to follow his laws and deny him a proper burial. Antigone's actions were justifiable but also could have brought unrest and uproar to the nation. King Creon's only obligation was to protect the city of Thebes. King Creon believed that all citizens have the moral obligation to defend their state and show their patriotism. He is a leader who strictly follows the rule of law and every citizen disobeying the law will be severely punished, so order and security will be kept in the nation; I'm speaking like a king. It's my responsibility, and I will act according to my own convictions! (Sophocles page 32). Although these days, King Creon's laws can be seen to be cruel and inhumane, one has to understand that life 400 BCE was a total different time with no mercy. Betrayal and civil disobedience were always punished with death. Civil disobedience is punishable today by probation or jail time.

Revolutionary changes have only be made possible by people who stood up against unjust rulings and laws. These people didnt care about the consequences, just like Antigone. All they cared about was fairness and justice for all. Dr. King was arrested and jailed for organizing illegal marches which eventually helped weaken the segregation and oppression. His answer to the question; How can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others? was that there are two types of laws: there are just laws, and there are unjust laws (MLK). Both Antigone and Dr. King were civil disobedient in a non-violent way. Antigone didnt try to escape after she was taken into custody by the Kingr’s guards and Dr. King accepted his jail sentence without any resistance. Being civil disobedient for the right cause is as justifiable as the punishment given by the authorities. However, It is because of these individuals like Dr. Martin Luther King, Thoreau and maybe even Antigone, that revolutionary changes were eventually made.

We live in a world where civil disobedience is part of our society. From a young age, we learn to stand up for what we believe in. People find it important to make a difference in the world. People find it important to show love and pride and that the unachievable is actually achievable even when all the odds are against you. Todayr’s political climate brings all kind of emotions to the surface and people feel they have to fight for their country and their beliefs, whatever side you are on. In his article In a Divided Era, One Thing Seems to Unite: Political Anger, Jeremy W. Peters writes High tension, raw emotion and occasional violence have always been a feature of American society, he continues but interviews with voters across the nations suggest that politics is changing how Americans think and behave in new

and unsettling ways (Peters). Antigone was written in a time where people didn't have any opportunities to make their voices heard, and women were to obey the men. King Creon makes also clear that he doesn't treat women any different than men with regards to the law when he said: women must learn to obey, as well as men. They can have no special treatment. Law is law (Sophocles page 24). The monarchy ruling system was set up in a way that the King ruled, made the laws and was at the same time the judge too. These days, we have all kinds of ways to let our voices be heard. We can go to social media, Twitter and Facebook, and we can organize legal protests. If we protest without a permit, we might be arrested but the overall consequences are minimal and if we are charged we have the right to a fair trial in court. We also have the opportunity to read about different opinions in magazines and newspapers or watch news programs on TV. Antigone didn't have such opportunities. She had no other outlets to fight for unjust laws. When she disobeyed the king's ruling, Antigone was severely punished but her religious beliefs gave her the courage to gainsay the King.

The choices people make in life can have severe consequences but sometimes these choices are necessary to fight against injustices and make revolutionary changes. Antigone fought for her personal beliefs when she unlawfully gave her brother a respectful burial. She acted out of love and peace for her family. Dr. King, Thoreau and the colonials who fought for America's independence all were civil disobedient for a cause that has written history. Civil disobedience is a necessity in our society because it often helps us to become a little closer to a more fair and just world. Antigone was right

to stand up for her personal and religious beliefs and although she paid a large price, her decision had positive consequences for society.