

**1: SparkNotes: The Oedipus Plays: Antigone, lines 1â€“**

*Sophocles' tragic drama, Antigone, presents to the reader a full range of characters: static and dynamic, flat and round; they are portrayed mostly through the showing technique.*

Harvard Studies in Classical Philology, Vol. JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. Reinhardt, "Aias Vers ," Hermes 78 ; C. Bowra, Sophoclean Tragedy Oxford ; V. Ehrenberg, Sophocles and Pericles Oxford ; B. Knox, The Heroic Temper: Studies in Sophoclean Tragedy Berkeley ; A. An Interpretation Cambridge ; Mary R. An Interpretation of Sophocles Cambridge, Mass. Nussbaum, The Fragility of Goodness Cambridge This content downloaded from Ironically, however, most critics probably feel that the first stasimon would occupy a more secure place in an anthology of Greek lyric poetry than it does in the Antigone itself. Though much admired in isolation, the ode has attracted considerably less attention among those who study the play as a whole. Most interpretation has focused on its problematic conclusion and neglected the opening three strophes. This paper focuses upon these three strophes, discussing how they fit into the intellectual climate of Athens in the 5th century and into the larger context of the play. The first stasimon has, it will be argued, more to do with Creon than most interpreters have felt, and makes an important contribution to characterizing him early in the play. But *betv6*; when applied to people is generally a positive term: The Chorus mentions the crimes of both men and women because Clytaemestra, her adultery with Aegisthus and her part in the murder of Agamemnon, is foremost in their minds. Here the message is clear: Whether the Aeschylean chorus is a source or only a parallel, it has exerted considerable influence on those reading the first stasimon of the Antigone. As a result they read the first stasimon of the Antigone as if it, like Choeph. Once it describes a skillful Athenian charioteer: De Corona , Or. They turn to the dangers of unlawful behavior: Their words are of course especially ironic: We the readers realize that the statement, though true, means something very different from what the speaker has in mind. They do not emphasize the enormity of man or of his crimes; they celebrate his achievements. Man dares to sail the raging seas Birds, game, and fish are his prey By his wiles he overcomes wild beasts, domesticates horse and bull Man has developed language and learned to build cities He can cure every ailment except death itself The positive, anthropocentric character of this ode, striking as it has been to many modern readers, is even more striking when set against the standard view of man as it is expressed not only in archaic Greek poetry but in Sophocles as well. For him, the first three stanzas of the ode are simply a series of examples He ultimately asserts that according to his interpretation the first stasimon "has a very close relevance" to the rest of the play, but in summarizing this relevance he focuses entirely upon the fourth stanza Contrast Miller 87, who argues that the first stasimon reflects the standard view of archaic Greek poetry. Later in the play the first Messenger moralizes on the disasters that he is about to describe: His moralizing closely resembles the programmatic view put forward by Solon in the first book of Herodotus. But similarity only emphasises the overarching difference. The prevailing spirit of Solon fr. Pythian 3 warns the reader throughout not to hope for too much: But Sophocles is not preaching mortal transience. If only *pt6vov* an escape from death itself is beyond him, the emphasis is on the "only. The tone is overwhelmingly positive and optimistic. When the fourth stanza does introduce darker issues a brief, but clearly transitional passage marks the change in tone and separates the warnings of ff. Still, when the first three stanzas build up a grand vision of what man can do, they show us what we stand to lose if we yield to our baser instincts. The brighter the light of , the darker the shadows of The optimism of the first stasimon poses a problem. We can, of course, throw up our hands and simply deny that the Chorus has anything in mind at all. No one in the play has This content downloaded from The Chorus does not admire the person who buried Polynices. One scholar suggested that the opening stanzas of the ode are "in effect, a long concessive clause" that lead up to the caveats of the final stanza. Greek Choruses simply do not celebrate those whom they unequivocally condemn. Clearly Protagoras, or at least Protagorean shown any inventiveness or ingenuity such as are here described"; see also Kamerbeek This allows the opening stanzas to have their

proper positive force, as Antigone is, in the context of the play as a whole, worthy of praise. The Chorus does not, however, support Antigone late in the play, and in any event has no idea who the criminal is. The ode, interpreted in this way, is ironic, for the Chorus thus praises something very different from what they think they are praising. This leaves unanswered, however, the question of what the Chorus actually thinks it is saying at the time. See however Whitman, who does try to reconcile the first three stanzas with the fourth; above, n. Antigone was probably performed in 442 and the Athenian colony at Thurii was probably founded in 443. While the precise date is uncertain, the colony was certainly established in the 440s. It was something different, and stood out. Unlike Athenian colonies in the Chersonnese or the Aegean, Thurii was not an Athenian cleruchy aimed at ridding the city of excess population and extending Athenian authority. Herodotus the historian and the famous city planner Hippodamus of Miletus took part. The main foundation for this particular date is the story, recorded at the end of Hypothesis 1, that Sophocles was elected general in 442 because of the Antigone. Generals were elected before the Great Dionysia thus is excluded, and Euripides won first prize in 441. A causal connection between the performance of the Antigone and a Sophoclean *ozparrvyta* may be doubted, but a temporal connection, suggesting the causal connection, is more likely, and the story does provide reasonable evidence that the Antigone was performed shortly before 442. On this anecdote note the skeptical discussion of Lefkowitz. In particular, he felt that laws should constantly be improved, and proposed that citizens be rewarded for civic innovation. A radical idea, conflicting with conservative belief in stability, it later drew sharp criticism from Aristotle. Faced with the problem of organizing a new kind of colony, one that would not simply mimic the standard cleruchies, constitutional theory had a practical importance in the late 5th c. Once the constitution of Thurii became a matter of public policy, Athenian citizens must have debated the issue among themselves. The constitution of Thurii, with colonists from throughout the Greek world, must have been a prominent topic, and not simply in Athens. Traditions may differ as to who was responsible for what, but all imply that the constitution of Thurii intrigued the leading intellects of the time<sup>33</sup> and had caught the public eye. The Antigone was performed when Thurii was no more than a few years old. The Athenians who awarded it the first prize had themselves voted to establish the colony and had no doubt discussed, if only privately, the form that it would take. The constitutional debate in Herodotus 3, which probably dates from the 440s,<sup>34</sup> may likewise reflect not only a popular interest in political theory but a sudden upsurge in such interest. But the Chorus did not first raise the question of how one should and should not run a city, nor does politics play a major role in 31. On which see Ferdinando Castagnoli, *Orthogonal Town Planning in Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass.). This would suggest that this section of Herodotus was well-known at the time when the Antigone was performed. In the previous scene Creon has outlined in general terms the principles that he plans to put into effect. Thurii and Protagoras had, however, temporarily at least, associated politics and "progress," and this association helps link these stanzas with the action of the play. Creon asserts that he will pursue the best interests of the state fearlessly and that he will place no personal feelings or attachments before his responsibilities as ruler -this view, in which the state takes absolute precedence, carries the idea of the *t66utg* to its logical conclusion. His position proves untenable, brings out his own weaknesses, and provides a backdrop for the sad shift from reformer to tyrannical despot. CREON As the play proceeds Creon becomes progressively less flexible and more authoritarian, and ends as an unabashed tyrant, autocratic and deaf to good advice. Lesky, *Die tragische Dichrung der Hellenen*<sup>3</sup> G6ttingen, suggests that the Ode has more to do with Creon than with the person who buried Polynices, but does not go into details. He probably means that the fourth stanza applies more accurately to Creon, but he does not distinguish between what the Chorus thinks and what is in fact true that Creon will turn out to be the villain of the fourth stanza. Segal observes that the ode "seems Creon does have his defenders: Calder III, This content downloaded from 129.173.255.100 on Tue, 20 Jun 2016 12:00:00 UTC. All use subject to [http://about.jstor.org/terms](#) Already he is perhaps just a bit too self-assertive. A century later Demosthenes, attacking Aeschines as venal and corrupt, would contrast the absolute unselfishness that Creon proclaims at Hogan, "The Protagonists of the Antigone," *Arethusa* 5. Podlecki, "Sophoclean Athens," in *Panathenaia* (Kansas) 59, calls it a "pompous and rather long-winded statement" that is intended to show us from the start what kind of man Creon is. Demosthenes provides strong testimony that the sentiments expressed here would have seemed admirable to Athenians at large. On this see Knox n. An aristocrat such as Cimon, however, had more in common with members of his

class in other Greek states than with most of his fellow Athenians. To such a person the polis-centered nationalism of Creon would have appeared harsh and vulgar. At the other end of the scale, servants of the state clearly looked to their own interests.

**2: The Internet Classics Archive | Antigone by Sophocles**

*Antigone- The Characterization Sophocles' tragic drama, Antigone, presents to the reader a full range of characters: static and dynamic, flat and round; they are portrayed mostly through the showing technique.*

He is the main protagonist of the play. Messenger nuntius is the man who relates what has happened to Oedipus in the beginning of Act 5 The chorus are singers that help the audience understand what emotion they should feel after a scene. Act One[ edit ] The play opens with a fearful Oedipus lamenting a vicious plague which is affecting Thebes, the city over which he rules. People are dying in such huge numbers that there are not enough of the living to ensure that each of the victims is cremated. He also mentions a prophecy that he had received from Apollo before he came to Thebes that he would kill his father and marry his mother. He had thus fled the kingdom of his father Polybus. However, Oedipus is so disturbed by what is occurring in Thebes that he even considers returning to his home city. Jocasta makes him more resolute though, and he stays. Act Two[ edit ] Creon returns from the Oracle at Delphi with the instruction that Thebes needs to avenge the death of the former king Laius for the plague to end. Oedipus utters an ironic curse on the yet unrevealed killer, by wishing for him "the crimes that I have fled from". The prophet Tiresias appears and is asked by Oedipus to make clear the meaning of the oracle. He then proceeds to carry out a sacrifice, which contains a number of horrific signs. Oedipus threatens him, and then Creon relents. He goes on to say that Laius promises the plague will cease if the king is expelled from Thebes. Creon advises Oedipus to abdicate , but Oedipus believes that he has invented this story, along with Tiresias, in order to seize his throne. Act Four[ edit ] Oedipus is troubled by the faint memory of a man whom he had killed on the road whilst coming to Thebes for behaving arrogantly before him. An elderly messenger comes from Corinth to tell Oedipus that his father King Polybus has died and for him to come and take his throne. He does not want to return as he still fears the prophecy that he will marry his mother. Act Five[ edit ] A messenger gives the news that Oedipus considered killing himself and having his body thrown to wild beasts, but then he felt that his crime deserved something worse due to the suffering Thebes has been going through. He decided to find a slow death for himself. He wanted a punishment where he would neither "join the number of the dead nor dwell among the living". The messenger goes on to explain how Oedipus tore out his eyes with his hands. The chorus question fate, each persons "commanding thread of life" and then hear Oedipus entering. He enters with both eyes removed and is confronted by Jocasta. She realises from his action that she must punish herself for her crimes as he has. She takes his sword and kills herself with it while on stage. The role of the chorus[ edit ] The chorus at the end of Act 1 give an account of the plague, and its development. At the end of Act 2 they give an account of Bacchus who was the patron god of Thebes. At the end of Act 3 they recount earlier horrific occurrences connected with Thebes. However, at the end of Act 4 they become more philosophical and praise living life along "a safe middle course" rather than being ambitious. They therefore relate the story of Icarus as a parable of a person who flew too high. They do however make clear that no one is able to alter their fate. This second point is made much more forcefully in a speech by them in Act 5, and they stress that neither God nor prayer can alter the life that is predestined for the individual. This view of fate is contrary to the teachings of Stoicism , which hold that fate and divinity are the same. Also the view of fate as arbitrary, rather than rational and benign, is not part of the Stoic cosmological view. The sacrifice carried out by Tiresias for example is given in graphic and gory detail. Oedipus is one of the five plays of Seneca chosen and translated by E. Watling and published by Penguin Classics in

**3: Project MUSE - Antigone (review)**

*v. 2. The moral sense of man and the lower animals / Charles Darwin -- Othello / William Shakespeare -- Of justice and injustice / David Hume -- The power of the majority / Alexis de Tocqueville -- Individual freedom / Georg Simmel -- Antigone / Sophocles.*

But the Issues are too complex to be satisfactorily reduced to a single antithetical formulation. We must avoid seeing the protagonists as one- dimensional representatives of simple oppositions: The Ineffaceable Impression which Sophocles makes on us today and his imperishable position in the literature of the world are both due to his character- drawing. The dialogue, action and motivation revolve about the characters in the story. Antigone We have so large base of authors that we can prepare a unique summary of any book. How fast would you like to get it? This Is done through mostly the showing technique, though the chorus at times Is Involved In the telling technique, telling the audience various pieces of information. The drama begins with Antigen inviting Kinsmen outside the palace doors to tell near privately: Antigen develops into a very religious person who is not afraid of death, and who respects the laws of the gods more than those of men: Nay, be what thou wilt; but I will bury him: I shall rest, a loved one with him whom I have loved, sinless in my crime; for I owe a longer allegiance to the dead than to the living: But if thou wilt, be guilty of dishonoring laws which the gods have established in honor. Kinsmen remains static for the present, unburned by the reasoning and sentiments of her sister: Kinsmen, in parting, accuses Antigen of rashness in her bold plans: Thus it can be said that Kinsmen does not retain her static quality for the duration of the drama. Croon is introduced into the drama; he replaces Testicles as ruler in Thebes: No sooner has the edict been promulgated than a guard, a flat character, reports to the king that the edict has been violated: Nothing so evil as money ever grew to be current among men. And when, after a long while, this storm had passed, the maid was seen; and she cried aloud with the sharp cry of a bird in its bitterness,-even as when, within the empty nest, it sees the bed stripped of its nestlings. So she also, when she saw the corpse bare, lifted up a voice of wailing, and called down curses on the doers of that deed. And straightway she brought thirsty dust in her hands; and from a shapely ewer of bronze, held high, with thrice-poured drink-offering she crowned the dead. Thus the reader sees a face-off in the drama between the king and the gods. This girl was already versed in insolence when she transgressed the laws that had been set forth; and, that done, 10, a second insult,-to vaunt of this, and exult in her deed. Croon shortly thereafter mistakenly charges Kinsmen Witt participating in the crime, though he has not a shred of evidence for this accusation: While I live, no woman shall rule me. Is there anything to support this radical transformation in her character? The answer seems to lie in familial loyalty towards her sister: With complete resignation Antigen accepts her impending death: No sooner is Antigen walled up in a desolate vault with limited food, than Terrifies appears at the palace with a message from the gods for the king: Antigen has already hanged herself. Croon comes to a full realization of the disastrous effects of his edict: A rash, indiscriminate fool! But disaster and the possibility of disaster do not occur only at the end, when a single act of power fails, when the violent one makes a false move; no, this disaster is fundamental, it governs and waits in the conflict between violence and the overpowering. Violence against the preponderant power of being must shatter against being, if being rules in its essence, as physics, as emerging ewer The protagonist, Antigen, is static in her unchanging attitude toward death, burial of the dead, and respecting the laws of the gods rather than of men. Kinsmen and Hammond become dynamic later in the tragedy. Rarely does the dramatist use the chorus to convey information; most of this comes from exchanges of dialogue, which would be the showing technique.

**4: Antigone - words | Study Guides and Book Summaries**

*Antigone study guide contains a biography of Sophocles, literature essays, quiz questions, major themes, characters, and a full summary and analysis.*

The backscene represents the front of the palace, with three doors, of which the central and largest is the principal entrance into the house. The time is at daybreak on the morning after the fall of the two brothers, Eteocles and Polyneices, and the flight of the defeated Argives. Nothing painful is there, nothing fraught with ruin, no shame, no dishonour, that I have not seen in thy woes and mine. And now what new edict is this of which they tell, that our Captain hath just published to all Thebes? Or is it hidden from thee that our friends are threatened with the doom of our foes? ISMENE No word of friends, Antigone, gladsome or painful, hath come to me, since we two sisters were bereft of brothers twain, killed in one day by twofold blow; and since in this last night the Argive host hath fled, know no more, whether my fortune be brighter, or more grievous. Eteocles, they say, with due observance of right and custom, he hath laid in the earth, for his honour among the dead below. But the hapless corpse of Polyneices-as rumour saith, it hath been published to the town that none shall entomb him or mourn, but leave unwept, unsepulchred, a welcome store for the birds, as they espy him, to feast on at will. Thou knowest it now; and thou wilt soon show whether thou art nobly bred, or the base daughter of a noble line. What can be thy meaning? False to him will I never be found. Nay, we must remember, first, that we were born women, as who should not strive with men; next, that we are ruled of the stronger, so that we must obey in these things, and in things yet sorer. I, therefore, asking the Spirits Infernal to pardon, seeing that force is put on me herein, will hearken to our rulers. Nay, be what thou wilt; but I will bury him: I shall rest, a loved one with him whom I have loved, sinless in my crime; for I owe a longer allegiance to the dead than to the living: But if thou wilt, be guilty of dishonouring laws which the gods have established in honour. How I fear for thee! At least, then, disclose this plan to none, but hide it closely,-and so, too, will I. Thou wilt be far more hateful for thy silence, if thou proclaim not these things to all. But leave me, and the folly that is mine alone, to suffer this dread thing; for I shall not suffer aught so dreadful as an ignoble death. ISMENE Go, then, if thou must; and of this be sure,-that though thine errand is foolish, to thy dear ones thou art truly dear. The warrior of the white shield, who came from Argos in his panoply, hath been stirred by thee to headlong flight, in swifter career; LEADER OF THE CHORUS systema 1 who set forth against our land by reason of the vexed claims of Polyneices; and, like shrill-screaming eagle, he flew over into our land, in snow-white pinion sheathed, with an armed throng, and with plumage of helms. So fierce was the noise of battle raised behind him, a thing too hard for him to conquer, as he wrestled with his dragon foe. LEADER systema 2 For Zeus utterly abhors the boasts of a proud tongue; and when he beheld them coming on in a great stream, in the haughty pride of clanging gold, he smote with brandished fire one who was now hasting to shout victory at his goal upon our ramparts. CHORUS strophe 2 Swung down, he fell on the earth with a crash, torch in hand, he who so lately, in the frenzy of the mad onset, was raging against us with the blasts of his tempestuous hate. But those threats fared not as he hoped; and to other foes the mighty War-god dispensed their several dooms, dealing havoc around, a mighty helper at our need. LEADER systema 3 For seven captains at seven gates, matched against seven, left the tribute of their panoplies to Zeus who turns the battle; save those two of cruel fate, who, born of one sire and one mother, set against each other their twain conquering spears, and are sharers in a common death. CHORUS antistrophe 2 But since Victory of glorious name hath come to us, with joy responsive to the joy of Thebe whose chariots are many, let us enjoy forgetfulness after the late wars, and visit all the temples of the gods with night-long dance and song; and may Bacchus be our leader, whose dancing shakes the land of Thebe. LEADER systema 4 But lo, the king of the land comes yonder, Creon, son of Menoeceus, our new ruler by the new fortunes that the gods have given; what counsel is he pondering, that he hath proposed this special conference of elders, summoned by his general mandate? CREON Sirs, the vessel of our State, after being tossed on wild waves, hath once more been safely steadied by the gods: No man can be fully known, in soul and spirit and mind, until he hath been seen versed in rule and law-giving. For if any, being supreme guide of the State, cleaves not to the best counsels,

but, through some fear, keeps his lips locked, I hold, and have ever held, him most base; and if any makes a friend of more account than his fatherland, that man hath no place in my regard. And in accord with them is the edict which I have now published to the folk touching the sons of Oedipus;-that Eteocles, who hath fallen fighting for our city, in all renown of arms, shall be entombed, and crowned with every rite that follows the noblest dead to their rest. Such the spirit of my dealing; and never, by deed of mine, shall the wicked stand in honour before the just; but whoso hath good will to Thebes, he shall be honoured of me, in his life and in his death. GUARD My liege, I will not say that I come breathless from speed, or that have plied a nimble foot; for often did my thoughts make me pause, and wheel round in my path, to return. And if Creon hears this from another, must not thou smart for it? At last, however, it carried the day that I should come hither-to thee; and, though my tale be nought, yet will I tell it; for I come with a good grip on one hope,-that I can suffer nothing but what is my fate. CREON Thou hast a shrewd eye for thy mark; well dost thou fence thyself round against the blame; clearly thou hast some strange thing to tell. What living man hath dared this deed? GUARD I know not; no stroke of pickaxe was seen there, no earth thrown up by mattock; the ground was hard and dry, unbroken, without track of wheels; the doer was one who had left no trace. And when the first day-watchman showed it to us, sore wonder fell on all. The dead man was veiled from us; not shut within a tomb, but lightly strewn with dust, as by the hand of one who shunned a curse. And no sign met the eye as though any beast of prey or any dog had come nigh to him, or torn him. Every man was the culprit, and no one was convicted, but all disclaimed knowledge of the deed. And we were ready to take red-hot iron in our hands;-to walk through fire;-to make oath by the gods that we had not done the deed,-that we were not privy to the planning or the doing. At last, when all our searching was fruitless, one spake, who made us all bend our faces on the earth in fear; for we saw not how we could gainsay him, or escape mischance if we obeyed. His counsel was that this deed must be reported to thee, and not hidden. And this seemed best; and the lot doomed my hapless self to win this prize. So here I stand,-as unwelcome as unwilling, well I wot; for no man delights in the bearer of bad news. CREON Cease, ere thy words fill me utterly with wrath, lest thou be found at once an old man and foolish. For thou sayest what is not to be borne, in saying that the gods have care for this corpse. Was it for high reward of trusty service that they sought to hide his nakedness, who came to burn their pillared shrines and sacred treasures, to burn their land, and scatter its laws to the winds? Or dost thou behold the gods honouring the wicked? From the first there were certain in the town that muttered against me, chafing at this edict, wagging their heads in secret; and kept not their necks duly under the yoke, like men contented with my sway. Nothing so evil as money ever grew to be current among men. This lays cities low, this drives men from their homes, this trains and warps honest souls till they set themselves to works of shame; this still teaches folk to practise villainies, and to know every godless deed. But all the men who wrought this thing for hire have made it sure that, soon or late, they shall pay the price. Now, as Zeus still hath my reverence, know this-I tell it thee on my oath: For thou wilt find that ill-gotten pelf brings more men to ruin than to weal. Or shall I just turn and go? CREON goes into the palace. But, be he caught or be he not-fortune must settle that-truly thou wilt not see me here again. Saved, even now, beyond hope and thought, I owe the gods great thanks. CHORUS singing strophe 1 Wonders are many, and none is more wonderful than man; the power that crosses the white sea, driven by the stormy south-wind, making a path under surges that threaten to engulf him; and Earth, the eldest of the gods, the immortal, the unwearied, doth he wear, turning the soil with the offspring of horses, as the ploughs go to and fro from year to year. And he masters by his arts the beast whose lair is in the wilds, who roams the hills; he tames the horse of shaggy mane, he puts the yoke upon its neck, he tames the tireless mountain bull. When he honours the laws of the land, and that justice which he hath sworn by the gods to uphold, proudly stands his city: Never may he share my hearth, never think my thoughts, who doth these things! I know her-how can I deny that yon maiden is Antigone? O hapless, and child of hapless sire,-Of Oedipus! Thou brought a prisoner? CREON enters hurriedly from the palace. What hath chanced, that makes my coming timely? GUARD O king, against nothing should men pledge their word; for the after-thought belies the first intent. I could have vowed that I should not soon be here again,-scared by thy threats, with which I had just been lashed: This time there was no casting of lots; no, this luck hath fallen to me, and to none else. And now, sire, take her thyself, question her, examine her, as thou wilt; but I have a right to free

and final quittance of this trouble. Dost thou speak aright? Is that plain and clear? When we had come to the place,-with those dread menaces of thine upon us,-we swept away all the dust that covered the corpse, and bared the dank body well; and then sat us down on the brow of the hill, to windward, heedful that the smell from him should not strike us; every man was wide awake, and kept his neighbour alert with torrents of threats, if anyone should be careless of this task. And when, after a long while, this storm had passed, the maid was seen; and she cried aloud with the sharp cry of a bird in its bitterness,-even as when, within the empty nest, it sees the bed stripped of its nestlings. So she also, when she saw the corpse bare, lifted up a voice of wailing, and called down curses on the doers of that deed. And straightway she brought thirsty dust in her hands; and from a shapely ewer of bronze, held high, with thrice-poured drink-offering she crowned the dead. We rushed forward when we saw it, and at once dosed upon our quarry, who was in no wise dismayed. Then we taxed her with her past and present doings; and she stood not on denial of aught,-at once to my joy and to my pain. Howbeit, all such things are of less account to me than mine own safety. ANTIGONE Yes; for it was not Zeus that had published me that edict; not such are the laws set among men by the justice who dwells with the gods below; nor deemed I that thy decrees were of such force, that a mortal could override the unwritten and unfailing statutes of heaven. For their life is not of to-day or yesterday, but from all time, and no man knows when they were first put forth. Not through dread of any human pride could I answer to the gods for breaking these. Die I must,-I knew that well how should I not? But if I am to die before my time, I count that a gain: And if my present deeds are foolish in thy sight, it may be that a foolish judge arraigns my folly. Now verily I am no man, she is the man, if this victory shall rest with her, and bring no penalty. So oft, before the deed, the mind stands self-convicted in its treason, when folks are plotting mischief in the dark. But verily this, too, is hateful,-when one who hath been caught in wickedness then seeks to make the crime a glory. In thy discourse there is nought that pleases me,-never may there be! And yet, for glory-whence could I have won a nobler, than by giving burial to mine own brother? All here would own that they thought it well, were not their lips sealed by fear. But royalty, blest in so much besides, hath the power to do and say what it will. While I live, no woman shall rule me.

**5: Editions of The Oedipus Cycle: Oedipus Rex, Oedipus at Colonus, Antigone by Sophocles**

*Antigone* was written in B.C. This story has been used as far back as the early 's to aid in the fight with civil disobedience as well as struggles for civil rights against the war in Vietnam.

It cannot take from me a noble death. The Chorus of "grave and reverend" Theban elders now enter to the sound of music, and burst into a triumphal hymn in honour of the late victory, as they hail the bright sunlight which streams above the eastern gates. For it is the Sun-god himself that has driven in headlong flight "The Argive hero of the argent shield. The gods had fought for the city they loved so well, and the seven chieftains had left their panoplies as trophies for the Theban temples. And now that victory has come with the bright daylight conclude the Chorus " "Forget the wars that now no longer rage, And seek we all the temples of the gods With choirs that last the livelong night. He delivers a "speech from the throne," in which he vindicates his past and present policy, and explains the reasons for his different treatment of the bodies of the two brothers in the decree which had roused the indignation of Antigone. There is a covert dread of opposition in the tone in which he deprecates the forbearance of his "good friends" and "trustworthy citizens" the Chorus. There is ostentation in his assertion of the great principle of patriotism, which he assumes to be the mainspring of his conduct, and which he is resolved to carry out, whatever may be the sacrifice of private affections involved: As to myself, it is, and was of old, My fixed belief that he is vile indeed Who, when the general State his guidance claims, Dares not adhere to wisest policy, But keeps his tongue locked up for fear of somewhat. Him too I reckon nowhere, who esteems A private friend more than his fatherland. Sailing in her, unswayed by sidelong gales, We make the only friends we ought to make. And then he recites the words of the decree, "all the honours of the tomb to the brave champion who had fallen in defence of hearth and home; but as to the body of the outcast and renegade, who had brought fire and sword against the city of his fathers, it shall lie unburied and dishonoured, to be mangled by dogs and vultures. He has scarcely spoken before one of the watchmen enters "a personage alien from the general lofty vein of tragedy. He is emphatically "vulgar" "a true son of democracy; low-bred, half-educated, insolent where he dare be so, but cringing before a superior will, with something of the coarse and garrulous wit of the "Sausage-seller " in the comedy of Aristophanes. Early though it is in the day, the recent decree has been already broken. Each had accused his fellow, and each had disclaimed all knowledge of the deed " "And we were ready in our hands to take Bars of hot iron, and to walk through fire, And call the gods to witness, none of us Were privy to his schemes who planned the deed, Nor his who wrought it. Then they had cast lots to decide who should hear the news to Creon; and the lot had fallen on this unlucky member of the force, who has now actually brought it "no pleasant office, he says; for "Though it be honest, it is never good To bring bad news. Some evil-disposed townsmen have tampered with the sentinels; and it is "money" which is at the root of this as of all other evils. If the Chorus cannot or will not discover the traitor "so help him Zeus! If we find him not, As well may be for this must chance decide , You will not see me coming here again. In the choral ode which follows, a noble tribute is paid to the versatility of human genius, and to the dominion of man over the powers of nature, "true even then, and far truer now, in these fairy times of modern science, which have eclipsed all the wonders of the " New Atlantis. Man extends his dominion over the fish of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field. They can scarcely believe their eyes; for, bound between two of the watch, Antigone walks in with a stately and defiant bearing. At the same moment Creon comes from the palace-gates, and meets the prisoner. The same watchman who had enraged Creon by his vulgar insolence before, becomes the spokesman now; and this time his tale is to the point. The guard had returned to their post, and, after clearing the corpse from the dust which had been sprinkled on it by the unknown visitor on the previous night, they had sat down on the hillside, at a little distance from the body, to watch for what might happen. The morning had passed without a sign, and the sun had reached mid-heavens, and still they waited, "scorched by the sultry heat. Then at last the maiden was seen, and she uttered a bitter cry to see her work undone, and the corpse again exposed. And as she was in the act of again sprinkling the dust and pouring a libation, the guards had rushed in and seized her. They are not of to-day nor yesterday, But live for ever, nor can man assign When

first they sprang to being. That I should die I knew how should I not? And before my time If I shall die, I reckon this a gain; For whoso lives, as I, in many woes, How can it be but he shall gain by death? This noble appeal of Antigone to a higher law only incenses Creon. This stubbornness of temper, which glories in crime, shall break and shiver like brittle steel. But to his angry denunciations Antigone answers shortly and simply, "Does he wish for anything beyond her death? But Antigone at once rejects her offer. My soul long since Hath died to render service to the dead. The Chorus mourn, in the strain which follows, over the doom of ancestral guilt—the sorrows upon sorrows which have extinguished the last faint gleam of light which had shone upon the house of Labdacus. Bright delusive hopes, high aspirations, mortal day-dreams, the glory of man and the pride of life—what are they, compared with the resistless decree of Zeus? Then ensues a scene familiar in life and fiction, where two strong wills inevitably clash—the son eager and impassioned, the father hardened by that sense of duty never so keenly felt as when stimulated by a private pique. The first and foremost of all duties in the home and in the state, argues Creon, is obedience. The family must be one—united under the patria potestas. Disobedience produces anarchy, and anarchy destroys the state. King though he is, let him beware of straining the reins of government too tightly. He should not act the tyrant by ruling only for himself. Had it been Romeo and Juliet thus torn asunder—what tender farewells, what passionate embraces, there would have been at the last! The horror of no death can equal that of a living grave, the fearful penalty which has been annexed in all ages for certain crimes—to the vestal virgin at Rome and to the nun in the middle ages for broken vows of chastity. But Antigone was pure from sin. Hitherto she has been buoyed up by the sublime enthusiasm which inspires the martyr; but now that the sacrifice has been consummated, what wonder if the nerves so tightly strung give way, if for a moment nature reasserts herself, and the heroine becomes the woman? The cold comfort of the Chorus and the consciousness of her own innocence can, after all, but slightly lighten the dread of approaching death to her who goes down, "living among the dead, to the strong dungeon of the tomb. She must tread this last sad journey alone, "unwept, and unwedded. Creon roughly breaks in upon the lament of Antigone; and at sight of him the maiden recovers something of her haughty spirit, and proclaims aloud the justice of her cause and her own innocence, deserted though she seems to be by men and gods. Looking with steady gaze towards the tomb whither she is being led, she utters her last farewell to light and life: And then, as Socrates, her antitype, tries to console himself and his friends "with the thought that if death he not annihilation or a dreamless sleep, he may pace Elysian fields, and converse with the spirits of the good and wise; so the maiden dwells upon the hope that in death she too may not be divided from those who were nearest and dearest to her on earth—that she may meet her father and her mother, and the brother for whom she has sacrificed everything. But then again there swells up in her heart the remembrance of the pleasant life she is about to leave: What law of heaven have I transgressed against? What use for me, ill-starred one, still to look To any god for succour, or to call On any friend for aid? For holiest deed I bear the charge of rank unholiness. If acts like these the gods on high approve, We, taught by pain, shall see that we have sinned; But if these sin [looking at Creon], I pray they suffer not Worse evils than the wrongs they do to me. And then she passes from the scene. We may pity her—indeed who could not? To the Greek maiden all beyond the Styx was dim, shadowy, and spectral as the ghosts with which Homer peopled Hades. Retribution, in the drama, follows closely upon crime. Scarcely has Antigone been led away to death—scarcely have the Chorus ended their dirge in her memory, in which they illustrate the law of suffering, from which even gods are not exempt—when Teiresias, the blind prophet, whose approach is always ominous of woe, confronts Creon, as Elijah confronted Ahab on his return from the vineyard whither he had gone up to take possession. The augur has read signs of coming disaster portended in the heavens above and in the earth beneath. To Teiresias, as to Elijah, "the horizon was darkened with the visions of vultures glutting on the carcasses of the dead, and the packs of savage dogs feeding on their remains, or lapping up their blood. Let the king, then, concludes the seer, listen to good counsel, and not reverse the common laws of humanity. Let him restore Antigone to the upper air, and bury Polynices. Sorrow shall come upon his own house; few and evil shall be the days that remain of his life. There shall be wailing and lamentation in the palace of Thebes, and the cities round shall rise in arms against the polluter of the holiest and most universal law of nature. Creon, overawed by the reality of this prediction, is smitten with remorse almost before Teiresias is led from the stage. He will

yield to necessity, and he summons his attendants to bring axes that may break open the tomb while there is yet time to release the maiden. Then the Chorus utter a fervent prayer to Bacchus, "the god of many names," to come to the rescue of Thebes, the city of his mother, Semele: Events crowd on one another in rapid succession, as the action hurries on to the catastrophe. In accordance with the usual machinery of Greek tragedy, the messenger of evil tidings enters, and in one line tells his story: Then follows the tale of doom. Creon had hurried to make what atonement he might to the outraged corpse of Polynices. It still lay upon the plain where the watchmen had left it, torn and mangled by the dogs, holding their carnival around the dead. Even before they reach it, a shrill cry of lamentation breaks upon their ears; and with a heart foreboding the worst, Creon bids his slaves roll away the stones and widen the entrance to the tomb. The sight which meets their eyes, as the set scene in the background opens, is piteous beyond all expression. Then Creon, groaning in the bitterness of his heart, entreats his son to leave the body and to come forth from the ill-omened chamber. So Lies death embracing death. Eurydice had heard to the end the tale of the messenger, and had then rushed into the palace without a word or cry. The Chorus argue the worst from this ominous silence; and their fears are fulfilled, for hardly has Creon again come upon the stage, bearing the dead body of his son in his arms, when he is met by a second messenger with the news that the queen, his wife, has stabbed herself to the heart with a mortal blow. And here the horror culminates. Nothing can be added to increase the agony and remorse of Creon—left living, it is true, but more to be pitied than the dead themselves,—crushed and humbled in the dust, all joy in life, all domestic happiness, all peace of mind gone for ever. Above all, he is tormented by the consciousness that it is his own stubborn pride, and not his evil destiny, that has thus made him the murderer of son and wife. All near at hand Is turned to evil; and upon my head There falls a doom far worse than I can bear.

## 6: SparkNotes: Antigone: Plot Overview

*Creon and the "Ode to Man" in Sophocles' Antigone* Sophocles appeals to two generally distinct sides of the word, each of which makes its own contribution to the overall meaning.<sup>7</sup> Sophocles may well be following Aeschylus Choeph. ff., which begins *no, & x Lâ€œv ya& pE'pet 6btv b et6tgecov Xrl.*

In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content: Christian Kopff Mark Griffith, ed. Cambridge University Press, The best volumes in the series, inaugurated by T. The introduction has almost thirty pages of background information on Sophocles and Athens, the myth, dramatic structure, technique, and style, the production of Greek drama, and the transmission of the text. The section on character is especially clear and forceful, but I found the pages on fantasies less focused and their discussion of Freudian criticism, with the rambling footnote on page 60, distracting. Colleagues will learn much from these pages, but students might well skip them and start reading the play. The text is temperately conservative, with good taste displayed when conjectures and variant readings are chosen. The commentary is careful, scholarly, and yet accessible to students. Difficult passages are translated with close attention to particles. In either case the affiliation to aeolics remains clear" This is the kind of explanation which convinces people that metrics is mumbo-jumbo. Griffith refers to A. This is also true of the colometry of manuscript L, Laurentianus In other choruses the colometry of manuscript L is superior to that concocted by modern scholars, for example, the second stasimon , the Ate Ode. L presents these lines as hipponactean and hagesichorean , an acephalous hipponactean. Two points noted by Griffith favor the manuscripts. More important, as Griffith notes sagaciously: You are not currently authenticated. View freely available titles:

**7: Sophocles (Collins)/Chapter 4 - Wikisource, the free online library**

*A summary of Antigone, lines in Sophocles's The Oedipus Plays. Learn exactly what happened in this chapter, scene, or section of The Oedipus Plays and what it means.*

Antigone is the girl who will rise up alone and die young. Though one would have expected Haemon to go for Ismene, he inexplicably proposed to Antigone on the night of a ball. Creon is king of Thebes, bound to the duties of rule. Eurydice will knit until the time comes for her to go to her room and die. Finally three Guards play cards, indifferent to the tragedy before them. After the first year, however, Eteocles, the elder, refused to step down. Polynices and six foreign princes marched on Thebes. The brothers killed each other in a duel, making Creon king. Creon ordered Eteocles buried in honor and left Polynices to rot on the pain of death. It is dawn, and the house is still asleep. Antigone sneaks in and the Nurse appears and asks where she has been. Suddenly Ismene enters, also asking where Antigone has been. Antigone sends the Nurse away for coffee. Antigone refuses and bids Ismene to go back to bed. Suddenly Haemon enters and Antigone asks Haemon to hold her with all his strength. She tells him that she will never be able to marry him. Ismene returns, terrified that Antigone will attempt to bury Polynices despite the daylight. Antigone reveals that she has already done so. He orders the guards to uncover the body and keep the matter secret. The Chorus appears and announces that the tragedy is on. Its spring is wound, and it will uncoil by itself. Unlike melodrama, tragedy is clean, restful, and flawless. In tragedy, everything is inevitable, hopeless, and known. All are bound to their parts. The Guards enter with the struggling Antigone. The First proposes that they throw a party. Creon sends the guards out. Once he is certain no one saw Antigone arrested, he orders her to bed, telling her to say that she has been ill. Antigone replies that she will only go out again tonight. Like Oedipus, her death must seem the "natural climax" to her life. Creon, on the other hand, devotes himself only to the order of the kingdom. Antigone insists that he cannot save her. Enraged, Creon seizes her arm and twists her to his side. Antigone remarks that Creon is squeezing her arm too tightly, but his grasp no longer hurts. He knows his reign makes him loathsome but he has no choice. Antigone rejoins that he should have said no; she can say no to anything she thinks vile. While ruined, she is a queen. Because Creon said yes, he can only sentence her to death. Creon asks her to pity him then and live. Antigone replies that she is not here to understand, only to say no and die. Creon makes a final appeal, saying that Antigone needs to understand what goes on in the wings of her drama. As a child, she must have known her brothers made her parents unhappy. Polynices was a cruel, vicious voluptuary. Being too cowardly to imprison him, Oedipus let him join the Argive army. When Creon sent for their bodies, they were found mashed together in a bloody pulp. He had the prettier one brought in. Dazed, Antigone moves to go her room. Creon urges her to find Haemon and marry quickly. She must not waste her life and its happiness. Antigone challenges his servile happiness. Antigone rejects her, but she does not deserve to die with her. Ismene swears she will bury Polynices herself then. Antigone calls on Creon to have her arrested, warning him that her disease is catching. Haemon enters and begs his father to stop the guards. Creon replies that the mob already knows the truth, and he can do nothing. Antigone sits before the First Guard in her cell; this is the last face she will see. The Guard rambles about his pay, rations, and professional quibbles. Antigone interrupts him, pointing out that she is soon to die. She asks how she is to be executed. The Guard informs her that she is to be immured. The Guard asks if he can do anything for her. She asks if he could give someone a letter, offering him her ring. Reluctant to endanger his job, the Guard suggests that she dictate her letter and he write it in his notebook in case they search his pockets. Antigone winces but accepts. She recites her letter, "Forgive me, my darling. You would all have been so happy except for Antigone. The Messenger delivers the news: Creon howled for the slaves to remove the stones. Antigone had hung herself. Haemon then stabbed himself and lay beside Antigone in a pool of blood. The Chorus notes that truly if it had not been for Antigone, all would have been at peace. All who had to die have now died. Only the Guards are left, and the tragedy does not matter to them.

**8: Creon's Role As Leader in Sophocles Antigone Essay Example | Graduateway**

*With the character of Antigone, the reader of the Oedipus Trilogy might get a false impression of watching a young girl grow up, as in a novel or a true series of related plays.*

### 9: Creon and the "Ode to Man" in Sophocles' Antigone - [PDF Document]

*It's as if the earth itself is attempting to aid Antigone in her "crime." When the Sentry reports this strange phenomenon, the Chorus asks Creon if it might be the gods' work. The King dismisses the idea, saying the gods wouldn't want to help out somebody as terrible as Polyneices.*

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