

C&T-E Notes
Antigone
9/21/2009

General Discussion Notes

Was Creon the main character (or was Antigone)?

- Creon was the only character to progress
-Antigone's character was fairly stagnant → too young to rationalize, extreme, constantly striving for martyrdom
- Creon was the primary tragic character (lost Antigone, Haemon, and Eurydice in an instant)

What were the factors that motivated Creon and Antigone?

Creon: pride as ruler; wanted what was "best" for the people (Line 735)

Antigone: *main* motivation was martyrdom, rather than wanting to bury Polynices simply out of respect (Lines 890-930); she pitied herself because of family curse (lost her father, no husband b/c of incest); actions were selfish, irrational, and image-based rather than the actions of a true martyr; typical teenage girl?

Important Passages/Passages Discussed

Line 175: Creon: "No man can be judged until he is given power to make laws/rules

- Creon's transition into power; Creon in *Antigone* vs. Creon in *Oedipus*
- stepping into role, especially following Oedipus, brings trouble to family
- Was Creon searching for power or was it bestowed upon him? → Why favoritism? Perhaps he favored Eteocles because he had control over Eteocles and was not yet willing to give it up to Polynices.
- Line 1348: Is wisdom necessary to lead? "So it is one learns, in old age, to be wise." (1353)
- Sophocles' view of monarchy? → appears to look down upon single person w/ complete power (Ode to Man, Lines 331-375)

Lines 198-206: Polynices' funeral/no burial

Lines 295-303 (tied in with Lines 1035-1040): Describes Creon's view of money

- Creon claims that \$\$\$ is corruptive
- Speech seems hypocritical → Substitute "power" in place of "money" and his speech describes Creon perfectly
- Pride and desire for power is what ultimately broke Creon

Line 485: Creon's argument with Antigone

- Extremely sexist remarks
- Perhaps statement being made by Sophocles:
 - women that are *too* bold will die → women should remain subservient
 - or
 - men who take too much of a woman's power will have troubles
- Was Ismene the ideal Greek woman? Subservient *and* beautiful

Lines 559-560: " Be brave. You are alive. Already my soul is dead. It has gone those who died before me" -Antigone

- Is Antigone being spiteful towards Ismene or truthful?
- Was Antigone too young to realize that, by dying for her cause, there was no way to reap the benefits (or see the outcome) of her work
- Was it a cause worthy of dying for? → must take into account cultural significance

Lines 630-730: Conversation between Creon and Haemon

- Haemon approaches father tactfully by winning his favor and treading lightly at first; he slowly works his way to his main debating issue
- How brittle is Haemon compared to Creon?
 - suicide after seeing Antigone
 - but also stood up to his father and argued his point
 - Creon seems to be more firm in his determination for power

Lines 677-680: "Never say that a woman bested us!" -Creon

-Extremely sexist passage; reflects cultural views of women

Lines 990-1090: Creon vs. Tiresius → compared to Oedipus vs. Tiresius

Ode to Man: Sophocles' statement about the nature of man, morality