

HUM 103 SEC 27

Worksheet 1

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Antigone (Scene i- iv)

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1. "I will commit a holy crime, for I

Must please those down below for a longer time

Than those up here, since there I'll lie forever."(90-92) - Antigone

Please explain what crime Antigone is referring to? How will it please "those down below" and displease "those up here" within the context of the play?

Answer:

Early on in Antigone, Antigone communicates to her sister, Ismene. Ismene has just informed Antigone that she must decline her request to assist in the funeral of their brother since she must follow Creon's orders. To overthrow his martial law and bury Polynices, she considers it "craziness." Antigone responds by withdrawing her appeal for Ismene's assistance. Her brother's body will be laid to rest by herself. In the play "Antigone" the main character Antigone basically sticks to her religious values. Her decision is straight that she will bury her brother Polyneices's dead body at any cost and named it as a "Holy crime" because Creon declared it as a unforgivable crime then.

In Antigone's perspective, though it would be a crime from the view of civil laws, but after death, every human being deserves funeral rites. Here, Antigone's actions were ethical in that she followed what she believed to be morally fair. Besides, it is both barbaric and unethical to leave a dead body openly on the street. Antigone is clear about the fact that she must disobey civil laws in order to uphold divine law. Antigone illustrates the conflict between divine and human law in her term "holy crime"—even though it is illegal, it is holy, sacred. Antigone reveals her true principles from her religion's rules and indicates the fact that she will suffer for this deed by defending her acts as being in the best interests of the dead and the god of the underworld. To be more specific, her activities in support of moral law can be considered as commendable and even righteous.

“...Than those up here, since there I'll lie forever.”(90-92) by this line, Antigone refers to the ruler of the then society, Creone and the gods of death respectively. To illustrate, her decision to bury her brother's dead body will please the gods of death, who live down there. And on the contrary, this decision will also displease Creone; the ruler of man-made laws up there in the context of the play called “ANTIGONE” by Sophocles.

6. Is Antigone correct in breaking the law imposed by the state to respect the dead? Is it fair for Antigone to completely unacknowledged that Polyneices was a traitor and should be punished accordingly, irrespective of being alive or dead?

Answer:

Antigone is correct from the perspective of religious laws that her brother's dead body should have all the funeral's rituals. As the play progresses, Creon thinks Polyneikes is a traitor who shouldn't be given a dignified funeral. Additionally, by concentrating on anger, Creon ignores the larger issue with religion. In defiance of the king's order, Antigone swears to bury her brother's corpse. She breaks the law and is not scared to defend her moral behavior. She disobeyed, and in rage, Creon chose to put her to death as a punishment. Concerns of religious laws vs man-made laws are at the center of the major conflict here. But from a religious ethical view, Antigone is correct to respect the dead.

Antigone really respects and admires religion, gods, and religious regulations. She firmly holds these beliefs, and her religious perspective is always obvious and direct .

Furthermore, while knowing that the outcome would not be in her favor, she had the guts to speak out for her rights. Despite being a traitor, Polyneikes, in Antigone's opinion, deserves a proper death burial. Because every corpse should have been properly buried in accordance with ethical and religious principles. It is a natural right for anyone as well. When a person dies, no matter what he/she has done in life, that doesn't actually relate to

his/her funeral. So, the dead should be given a proper dignified funeral in any circumstances. I would do the same if I were in Antigone's place. So, in my opinion, Polyneices deserves to be buried since it is irrelevant what he did now that he is dead.
