Candidate 4 evidence

"Antigone is right, but Creon is not wrong" – A reflection on moral complexity in *Antigone* by Jean Anouilh

When Albert Camus said « Antigone a raison, mais Créon n'a pas tort », he really captured what makes Anouilh's play so powerful and still relevant today. It's not just a simple story about good versus evil, like in a lot of classic tragedies. Instead, Anouilh shows that both Antigone and Creon have valid arguments, even though everything ends badly. Antigone stands for something absolute, while Creon is trying to stop a fragile society from collapsing. When I read the play, it honestly made me think about real life situations, where the "right" choice isn't always clear.

First, Antigone. It's hard not to feel that she is morally right. She refuses to obey Creon's law that her brother Polynices cannot be buried. For her, the laws of the gods and family come before anything else. Not burying the dead is presented as something deeply wrong, almost inhuman. From the beginning, she is shown as different — "petite, maigre, noiraude, mal peignée." She doesn't try to fit in, and she clearly doesn't care about pleasing others. She is stubborn, but also completely sure of what she believes.

As Études littéraires explains, « Antigone incarne une exigence absolue, refusant tout compromis avec la réalité politique ». This idea of "no compromise" really sums her up, but it also makes her difficult to reason with.

One line that really stayed with me is: « Je ne suis pas là pour comprendre. Je suis là pour dire non et pour mourir. » It sounds extreme, and maybe even a bit shocking at first. It almost feels like she has already decided her fate. But at the same time, there's something admirable about that level of conviction. She refuses to accept a world she sees as unjust. Considering the play was performed in 1944, during the occupation of France, it's not surprising that many people saw her as a symbol of resistance.

What I find interesting is that she doesn't gain anything from her actions. She knows she is going to die, and she still goes ahead. She could choose to live, but she rejects that option completely. When she says « Je crache sur votre bonheur ! », it shows how strongly she rejects the idea of a "normal" life if it means accepting something she believes is wrong. For her, living without meaning isn't really living at all.

At the same time, this is where things start to feel more complicated. Creon is not a typical villain, and I think that's what makes the play more interesting. He's not cruel for the sake of it. He's trying to keep control of Thebes after a civil war, which is already a very unstable situation. If he allows Polynices to be buried, it could look like he is accepting rebellion, and that could make things worse.

According to Larousse, Créon « représente la raison d'État et la nécessité de maintenir l'ordre ». That doesn't make him morally right, but it does make his actions more understandable.

He even says himself: « Je suis roi, je dois maintenir l'ordre. » What's quite striking is that he didn't even want to be king. He took the role because someone had to. That makes him feel more human. In his discussion with Antigone, he doesn't immediately punish her — he actually tries to save her. When he says « Aie pitié de moi, et vis », it almost sounds like he's asking her for help as much as giving her a chance.

Still, Creon's position is quite bleak. He knows his decisions aren't ideal, but he believes they are necessary. He talks about how being king means saying yes to things you don't really believe in. That idea is quite sad, because it suggests he has given up any hope of personal happiness.

So even if Creon is wrong in a moral sense, he isn't completely wrong politically. And I think that's what makes the situation frustrating — both perspectives make sense in different ways.

That said, neither character is perfect. Antigone's refusal to compromise is admirable, but also destructive. She doesn't really consider the consequences of her actions on others. Hémon and Eurydice both die as a result, which makes you wonder if her decision was entirely fair.

At the same time, Creon is too rigid. Even when he starts to doubt himself, he delays changing his decision. Pride definitely plays a role here. If he had acted sooner, the outcome might have been different.

In the end, Camus' idea still feels accurate. Antigone is right in terms of personal truth, while Creon is not wrong in terms of responsibility. As Études littéraires suggests, it's really a conflict between moral and political legitimacy.

What makes the play stand out is that it doesn't give a clear answer. And honestly, that's a bit uncomfortable. It forces us to think about what we would do in the same situation, and I'm not sure there's an easy answer.

In conclusion, the fact that both Antigone and Creon can be right in their own way is what makes the play so powerful. It shows that moral decisions are not always simple, and that sometimes, whatever choice we make will have consequences.

Bibliography

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