

# Use of fatal flaw in sophocle's works

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Through their writings, the ancient Greeks wrote stories that explained the inmost, darkest thoughts that are in a person's mind. Sophocles did so through his three plays in the Oedipus Cycle which included Oedipus Rex, Oedipus at Colonus, and Antigone. Each play involves characters who have a hamartia. Oedipus tends to pity himself to his people in Oedipus Rex. Creon is extremely bossy and belligerent throughout each of the plays, sometimes more than he needs to be. Antigone is stubborn and stands her ground no matter what the circumstances are. In all three plays, Sophocles shows how each character uses their power to cover themselves up, though their fatal flaw reveals their true identity.

Oedipus tends to pity himself, which makes him come off as weak and not as great of a leader that he views himself as. This self-pity also causes him to be selfish. When the people of Thebes desperately need their king to save the day, Oedipus is there to take control and fight against the problems they face. In the opening scene of Oedipus Rex, the people of Thebes need Oedipus to save them from the Sphinx. The people look to the gods to save them, though they seem to not be doing anything, therefore Oedipus is the next best option. Due to the fact that Oedipus has saved them once before, the people of Thebes are depending on him. Oedipus, who is supposed to be the all-mighty king, explains to the people that he understands they need help, though he has problems himself.

Poor children! You may be sure I know

All that you longed for in your coming here.

I know that you are deathly sick; and yet,

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Sick as you are, not one is as sick as I. (5)

If Creon, whom I trusted, Creon my friend,

For this great office which the city once

Put in my hands unsought-if for this power

Creon desires in secret to destroy me! (21)

Through this quote, Oedipus is using pity to cover up the fact that he suffers for both the city and himself, though he cares more about himself. This causes the people of Thebes to realize how selfish their savior has become. Oedipus' fatal flaw causes his own people to turn against him.

Creon takes his power as king too seriously. He is king of Thebes in Antigone, therefore he can manipulate the law. Creon claims that all of his beliefs and morals are right and everyone else's are invalid, and if you break the law if you are going against him. When it comes to the burial of Polynices, that is against Creon's law. Some of the other characters believe that it is right to bury his corpse, and Creon is not happy about it...

The gods favor this corpse? Why? How had he served them?

Tried to loot their temples, burn their images,

Yes, and the whole State, and its laws with it!

Is it your senile opinion that the gods love to honor bad men? (201)

Creon gets extremely angered by the people who believe it is right to bury him and lashes out on them. In Creon's opinion, he thinks that he knows what the gods want and it is for Polynices to not be buried. This causes everyone to feel threatened and afraid of him. Creon thinks that his superiority means that what he declares as the law is right and no one should dare to go against them.

Antigone refuses to change her maverick mind, no matter how severe the consequences are. Almost everyone believes that it is absolutely wrong to bury Polynices, her brother. Even her sister, Ismene, does not want to bury him. Antigone and Ismene know that if they bury Polynices, they will be killed by Creon because they are breaking his law. Ismene makes the wise decision to follow his rule and backs out on the burial. Antigone sticks with her gut. She knows that if she buries Polynices that she will be killed, though still believes it is her duty as his sister. She tries to convince Ismene to come with her to bury him, but she cannot convince her.

**Antigone:**

Ismene, I am going to bury him. Will you come?

Ismene:

Bury him! You have just said the new law forbids it.

**Antigone:**

He is my brother. And he is your brother, too.

Ismene:

But think of the danger! Think what Creon will do!

**Antigone:**

Creon is not strong enough to stand in my way. (191)

Ismene follows the rule and is loyal to Creon, but clearly Antigone does not care. She believes that family is much more important than Creon's opinion based laws. Antigone's fearless attitude ends up costing her her life.

Sophocles shows how each character uses their fatal flaw to cover up the reality of their lives. Oedipus pities himself to the point where his own people turn against him. Creon takes himself too seriously and believes that only he is right and does not listen to his people, making him a rather selfish ruler.

Antigone is a fierce woman who puts her foot down and does not allow others to change her mind despite the circumstances. These writings contain characters with hamartias that are true to their identity.