

The tragic legacy



Creon, a stubborn man with what he saw in himself as potential, saw his chance of fulfilling his dream when his mighty brother, ex-king, Oedipus with his two older sons, Polynices and Eteocles, passed away. The brothers were too prideful. They both wanted the power that came with taking over the throne at Thebes which caused the battle between them and ended with their deaths. Creon is finally given the chance to obtain the power he had always wanted. Yet, as soon as he takes over, he makes a wrong decision which starts the chain of dark unfortunate events. He refuses to bury Polynices, as in his mind he was a traitor. His order sparks a flame of vengeful anger in Antigone.

Creon's reaction to Antigone's actions leads to those tragic consequences which essentially lead to Creon being portrayed as the tragic hero of the play *Antigone* by Sophocles. King Creon plays an important role in *Antigone*. It is he who keeps the tragedy going, he is "the almighty" whom everyone must fear and everything revolves around his actions. He makes sure to express his nobility to seem higher and righteous in the eyes of others especially when he states "Both stained with brother-blood, dead in a day- and I their next of kin, inherited the throne and kingdom which I now possess" (Sophocles lines 137-139). This quotation proves nobility is important to Creon if he chose to speak of it in one of his first lines in the play. A character's first part is when the audience get a first impression and usually the major facts are brought out. If Sophocles decided to have Creon mention nobility in his first part that must mean it has something important to do with the character. The people already know that Creon is related to Oedipus and his two sons, but Creon finds it necessary to state that once more, as if it will

raise people's perspectives of him. Although Creon is considered almighty and righteous, he does not make quality decisions because of his one tragic flaw, his pride. His pride is what gets in the way of good decisions for the city rather than just for Creon himself.

Creon is focused on proving his power so much, he stops listening to what well-wishers have to say. When Haemon, his son, comes up to the King and tells him neither he or the people of Thebes agree with Creon on his decisions, Creon states in outrage " The people of Thebes! Since when do I take my orders from the people of Thebes? / No, I am king, and responsible only to myself" (Sophocles lines 630 / 632). At the beginning of the play, Creon is trying to teach the people of Thebes a lesson, no one, even Creon's niece, can get away with a crime. He gets so caught up in teaching that lesson and making his point, his true flaws showed up. According to Tiresias, the great Greek gods despise pride which is what leads to the curse of the tragic deaths of his loved ones, leaving Creon in misery. Creon is given the chance to make many important decisions which make up the plot of Antigone and that expresses the true tragic hero he is. It is so easy to see Creon makes these hard decisions with apparent effortless and careless ease that his own son Haemon decides to give him this advice " Father, pause, and put aside your anger. I think, for what my young opinion's worth, That good as it is to have infallible wisdom, Since this is rarely found, the next best thing is to be willing to listen to wise advice. " (Sophocles lines 615-619). Even his son advises Creon to look through his anger and think his decisions through. Creon is too stubborn and reluctant to listen. Most times when making important decisions Creon is blinded by his power and

almightiness. It looks like punishment from the Gods is the only way to open his eyes. Eventually, Creon realizes the real outcome of what he has done. Yet it is too late.

Creon is left broken along with his problematic decisions. The stars make mistakes too. Main characters, especially the tragic heroes, have to be at the center of attention in order to be significant enough to make a difference in the plot. Tragic heroes have to have some type of evident flaw in order to keep the action going, in Creon's case that it his pride which gets in the way of smart thinking. Many chance plot changing chances, such as decision making, must be given to the tragic hero. Creon's character fits perfectly into the criteria of a tragic hero. Only when he's been left all alone in his sorrows and so many lives were lost because of him, did he understand how wrong he had been. Antigone by Sophocles could have gone on a much different path if it weren't for his horrible decisions and that one biggest tragic flaw. Pride.