

Creon is the hero in  
antigone



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

As the main character in the Greek classic "Antigone," Creon undergoes recognition and a reversal of fortune. Recognition is defined when the main character changes from ignorance to awareness. Reversal of fortune is described as a turn in fortune, usually from good fortune to bad fortune. Creon is also a better fit to Aristotle's criteria of a tragic hero because the definition of a tragic hero is someone who holds great status and has hamartia. Hamartia is defined as a major character flaw that plays a part in the downfall of the character.

Also, Aristotle states that in a plot the tragic hero has to go through reversal of fortune as well as recognition. It is Creon who experiences all of these elements making him the true tragic hero and the main character in the play. Creon is the character who holds great status in the play. He is the King of Thebes where the kingdom including guards and armies respect him to a point that they are willing to fight for him. Creon's decrees is the highest law of the land and people are willing to lay the dead unburied and dishonored, which goes against the will of the gods.

While Antigone has no status other than the fact that she has royal blood, from a fallen king. When Antigone states that she is going to bury Polyneices Ismene, Antigone's sister, is terrified for Antigone's life and tries to stop Antigone by telling her, If we defy the King's prerogative And break the law, our death will be more shameful Even than theirs. Remember too that we Are women, not made to fight with men. Since they Who rule us now are stronger far than we, In this and worse than this we must obey them. lines 59-64) Ismene reminds Antigone that she hold no status as a woman and as a daughter of the disgraced king, so she cannot go against Creon's laws.

Creon is clearly the character who holds status in the play, because he is a male and king. While Antigone is not strong enough to fight a man and cannot save herself from Creon's wrath. Creon has a major character flaw; he is very prideful, refuses to listen to anyone else's advice, and is afraid to admit when he is wrong. When Haemon confronts Creon to argue for Antigone's life, and says the kingdom cries for the injustice that fell on Antigone.

Creon refuses to pardon Antigone and becomes furious that Haemon questions his authority as king (Sophocles 24-26). Creon says, "What? men of our age go to school again/ And take a lesson from a very boy" (lines 725-6)? Creon's pride stops him from seeing the injustice he has passed on Antigone and how unpopular he is becoming with the people. Creon says, "I know it too, and I am very tired/ To yield is very hard, but to resist/ And meet disaster, that is harder" (lines 1095-7). Creon knows what Teiresias says is right, but he does not want to reverse his rulings that meeting the consequences is easier.

This pride and stubbornness leads to Creon's downfall. While, Antigone's flaw is that she disobeys Creon's decree about leaving Polyneices unburied and dishonored. The people of Thebes support her actions because they see her as a righteous woman standing by her family duties (Sophocles 25). Creon has a major character flaw, pride, and this leads to his doom; while Antigone does not have a major flaw as a character. Creon goes through peripeteia, which is the reversal of fortune. In the beginning of the play Creon started out with everything: family, a kingdom, wealth, and the respect of the nation.

However, at the end of the play Creon loses everything. Haemon, Creon's son, kills himself because Antigone commits suicide. Then, Eurydice, Creon's wife, kills herself after learning that Haemon is dead. Creon is viewed as a fool and unjust ruler, because of his punishment towards Antigone and how he refused to listen to Teiresias (Sophocles 34-36). While Antigone started out with nothing. She had lost both her brothers in the civil war and one is being honored in death while her other brother is being dishonored (Sophocles 3).

Antigone has no status because she is a woman, and at the end of the play she kills herself after being buried alive in a tomb by Creon (Sophocles 31). Creon starts with everything and loses it at the end of the play, while Antigone's fortune worsened throughout the course of the play. Creon's recognition scene occurs at the end of the play. Creon is angry with Haemon for questioning his authority because Antigone defied his orders on burying Polyneices. So, Creon orders Antigone to be buried alive in a tomb.

Creon doesn't change his rulings on her fate, because he believes he is right. Even when Teiresias, the seer, comes to warn him that the gods are not happy with what Creon has done to the dead and to Antigone (Sophocles 37). However, in the end of the play, Creon realizes that he was a fool. Creon cries out, "The guilt falls on me alone; none but I have slain her; no other shares in this sin. 'Twas I who was the blow. This is the truth, my friends" (lines 1318-21). Creon recognizes that it was his actions and stubbornness alone that led to his doom and the reason why he lost his family.

Antigone does not go through a recognition scene, because from the beginning she believes that in giving Polyneices a proper burial is the right thing to do in the eyes of the gods and by her family. Antigone holds this belief until her death. It is Creon who goes through a recognition scene while Antigone is self-righteous until the end. Antigone can be seen as the main character and the heroine of the play because the play is titled "Antigone." Antigone is an important character in the play, because she is the initial spark that affected Creon's ruling and ultimately his life.

However, Sophocles does not follow Antigone's actions or her death. Antigone's death is the catalyst behind Haemon's death which led to Eurydice's demise, but the play focuses on how these deaths affected Creon (Sophocles 43-44). These deaths, Haemon's and Eurydice's, reveal to Creon that he was being foolish and stubborn. In addition, Antigone is gone for most of the play. She is introduced in the beginning with her determination to give her brother a proper burial in the eyes of the gods, no matter what the consequences. Antigone's death is very anticlimactic, because the play does not follow her death.

Sophocles chooses to follow Creon's actions and reactions throughout the play, while Antigone is a secondary character that the audience does not have a connection to. Creon is ultimately the tragic hero because he goes through the reversal of fortune and recognizes that his actions have been foolish in the eyes of the gods. Creon's high status and fall from power was what the play focused on. Creon was the one who realized that the judgments he passed were foolish and led to the loss of his family and the respect of the nation. On the other hand, Antigone did not have the high

status Creon held and she did not go through a recognition scene. Antigone's fortune worsened as the play went on, she started out with nothing and she killed herself after being buried alive in a tomb. Creon ultimately follows Aristotle's criteria on what it takes to be a tragic hero, while Antigone was an important character but lacked depth to be the true tragic hero and the main character in the play. Works Cited " Aristotle's Tragic Terms. " Welcome to Ohio University. Web. 10 Feb. 2012. . Sophocles. " Antigone. " Trans. H. D. F. Kitto. Antigone, Oedipus the King, and Electra. Ed. Edith Hall. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008. Print.