

Brutus: nobility marred by a tragic flaw essay



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After reading *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* by William Shakespeare, some readers interpret Julius Caesar as the tragic hero of the play. However, Brutus is the real tragic hero. A tragic hero is a character that is virtuous, but makes crucial errors in judgment or possesses a tragic flaw that leads to their downfall. The tragic flaw that mars Brutus is his rigid sense of moral and political principles. Unlike Caesar, Brutus was able to separate his public life from his private life, but this hinders him when making major decisions. His character held clear distinctions between honor, friendships and his devotion to Rome.

Throughout the play, Brutus places too much trust within the conspirators, especially in Mark Antony, which is a crucial error in judgment. Brutus is the tragic hero in *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* because of his stern belief in moral and political principles and his inflexible sense of honor and nobility. First off, Brutus's inflexible sense of honor made it easy for the conspirators to manipulate him. Brutus was very loyal to his close friends; however, when the future of Rome was taken into consideration, he was able to separate his feelings for his friends from his duties to the Republic.

This allowed him to believe that Caesar, one of his closest friends, had to die for the good of the republic. The other conspirators sought to murder Caesar because they were envious of his immense power. However, Brutus thought that killing Caesar would actually lead to a better Rome. In Act II Scene I, the line, "We shall be called purgers, not murderers," said by Brutus, emphasizes that Brutus believed killing Caesar would be beneficiary to Rome and was within good reason. This tragic flaw leads to not only Caesar's downfall, but Brutus', as well.

Secondly, Brutus placed too much trust into the hands of the conspirators and Mark Antony. His first mistake was allowing Antony to live after it was proposed by Cassius that he be killed, as well, in the lines, " Let Antony and Caesar fall together," (Act II. Sc. I). Allowing Antony to speak at Caesar's funeral was also a mistake. Brutus placed too much trust in Mark Antony. He left him with the body of Caesar and was not present when Antony gave his speech at the funeral oration. This allowed Antony to sway the opinions of the plebeians and inspire them to rise up and mutiny against the conspirators.

Furthermore, Brutus' strong sense of nobility and moral principles altered his perception and caused him to underestimate the power of Mark Antony. He misjudged Antony's loyalty to Caesar and to Rome, calling him " but a limb of Caesar," (Act II. Sc. I). Because of his altered perception in judgment, Brutus thought that every leader in Rome was as noble as him, acting for the good of the republic, which wasn't entirely the case. Brutus was easily convinced that Mark Antony had joined the conspirators' side after the death of Caesar and was unable to see through his false promises.

Brutus never thought that the death of Caesar would provoke such a reaction from Antony because he assumed that every politician in Rome held clear distinctions between their private and public lives, concerning their duties in Rome. Ultimately, Brutus placed too much trust into the hands of others because his perception was marred by his strong sense of nobility. He also upheld an inflexible sense of honor which further contributed to his downfall. Brutus was easily manipulated into joining the conspiracy and easily convinced that Caesar had to die for the good of Rome.

He put too much trust in Mark Antony, allowing him to live and produce a mutiny amongst the plebeians of Rome. His nobility of character was stressed and this altered his perception of judgment. The tragic hero dies at the end of the play, after facing death with nobility and courage. In the end, Brutus commits the only act of nobility left in him: suicide. Before ending his life, Brutus, like a true tragic hero, realized what errors he had made and how they contributed to his destruction. This, along with all of the other characteristics demonstrated, proves that Brutus is the real tragic hero in The Tragedy of Julius Caesar.