

Depiction of sophocle's antigone

Literature



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Antigone as a Tragic Hero

In Sophocle's *Antigone*, the characters show a variety of traits. However, Antigone's life of aspiration, family of noble rank, and display of good mentality portray her as the tragic hero of the story. A tragic hero must include three main traits. The hero must have a tragic flaw, a family of high class or rank, and must be a fundamentally good person. Antigone fulfills all three traits painstakingly in the mythic story of *Antigone*. A tragic flaw plays a very imperative part of a tragic hero. Tragic flaw simply means a "character weakness." The most common types of tragic flaws are unwarranted pride, ambition, and jealousy.

Usually the hero causes his own downfall and ultimately recognizes his own error and accepts the consequences. In *Antigone*, Antigone displays the tragic flaw of disproportionate ambition. At the beginning of the story, Antigone and her sister, Ismene, are discussing the death of their brother, Polyneices. Creon, the king of Thebes, has issued a diktat that no one shall bury him, and that his body must lay in the fields as carrion for birds. The penalty for burying him is stoning in the public square. However, Antigone is objective on burying him. She remarks, "Ismene, dear sister, you would think that we had already suffered enough for the curse of Oedipus.

I cannot imagine any grief that you and I have not gone through." Antigone goes on, speaking with confidence of her plans to bury her brother. She asks for help from Ismene, but Ismene is aghast. Ismene reminds her of the danger of what Creon will do and refuses to take part in burying Polyneices. The scene ends with Antigone's retorting that she will not want Ismene's

help, even if she asks to come. Antigone leaves the scene with her mind made up, disregarding Ismene's arguments. Antigone's raging ambition in the Prologue is her tragic flaw, which is an important characteristic of a tragic hero. A tragic hero must also have family of noble rank or high class. Antigone and Ismene are the daughters of Oedipus and Jocasta, the former King and Queen of Thebes. At birth, Oedipus was sent off and left to die. However, a shepherd gave Oedipus to the King and Queen of Corinth, and as a young man, Oedipus traveled to Thebes, where he married Jocasta, his mother.

Jocasta and Oedipus married and had four children: two sons, Polyneices and Eteocles, and two daughters, Antigone and Ismene. Antigone is also the niece of Creon, Jocasta's brother and now the king of Thebes. Until now, Antigone has always been loyal to Creon, but his decree to keep Polyneices unburied disturbs Antigone. Having a family of noble rank is a large part of being a tragic hero, and Antigone clearly meets these credentials. Ultimately, Antigone also fits the description of a tragic hero because of her display of good mentality.

In order to become a tragic hero, the person has to be notorious for living a good life and not participating in vile acts. If a person has been a murderer or unswerving crimes, then he would not be deemed as a tragic hero to begin with. In Antigone's plans to bury her brother, she uses her heart and aptitude well. She plans the burial of Polyneices well and listens closely to her sister. Although she does not agree with Ismene, she does listen closely to her arguments and contradictions.

Trivial details like listening and understanding are very important to judge someone as a good person. Antigone also proves to be very thoughtful. She regards her brother, Polyneices, highly, and knows that he deserves a burial. She also compliments herself and her own opinions by completing her goal to bury Polyneices. Consideration and respect are especially important traits of being a fundamentally good person. Antigone's display of good mentality demonstrates her as a tragic hero. Sophocle's Antigone contains much thought and opinion. Sophocles stresses the arguments and feelings of the entire characters well. However, Antigone's life of aspiration, family of noble rank, and display of good mentality depict her as the tragic hero of the story.