

# Creon and gilgamesh essay sample



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There are many great stories and tales that come from the Ancient Civilization, two of them being Sophocles' Antigone and the epic of Gilgamesh. Gilgamesh tells the story of the careless king of Uruk, that is looking for immortality, who later becomes a wise and responsible king, and the other, Antigone, tells the story of the king of Thebes that is clouded by his own power, who loses everything important to him and is left with sorrow and guilt. Creon, from Antigone, and Gilgamesh are considered to be ruthless leaders. They rule their kingdoms both differently and the same, they both have faults and strengths and how those go into how they remain in power, and how the authors of the stories produce lessons that can be learned by each ruler. Let us start by discussing their similarities and differences.

Creon and Gilgamesh are two completely different people, but in some ways, they are the same. Some of their differences include that Creon is very concerned with upholding the law throughout his kingdom, while Gilgamesh was not concerned with anything regarding his kingdom. Another example of their differences would be that Creon is very cruel and Gilgamesh was careless. An example of Gilgamesh's carelessness happens when he loses the immortality plant to a snake.

Gilgamesh is also kind of a trickster. When he goes on his journey to seek immortality, he goes to seek out Utnapishtim because Utnapishtim has achieved immortality. He relates to Gilgamesh the story of how he and his wife became immortal, and then challenges Gilgamesh to stay awake for six days and seven nights to earn immortality. Gilgamesh agrees, but he falls asleep right away, thinking he can fool Utnapishtim. But Utnapishtim proves to Gilgamesh that he did not succeed in staying awake because Utnapishtim

had his wife bake bread for every day that Gilgamesh slept. On the seventh day, Utnapishtim showed Gilgamesh the first piece of bread, which was covered in mold, proving that Gilgamesh slept for seven days straight. This leads Gilgamesh to find the immortal plant, but as stated above, he lost it to a snake because he was careless.

Now, moving on to their similarities, starting with that they both are prideful and stubborn. In Sophocles' play, when Antigone, who also happens to be the niece of Creon, commits the crime of burying her traitor brother, Creon punishes her. He does not listen to his son, Haemon, who tries to reason with his father to not execute Antigone. Creon also does not listen to the blind prophet, Teiresias, who warns Creon that he is making a mistake and the Gods do not approve of what he is doing. Teiresias tells Creon: " Take these things to heart, my son, I warn you. All men make mistakes, it is only human. But once the wrong is done, a man can turn his back on folly, misfortune too, if he tries to make amends, however low he's fallen, and stops his bullnecked ways. Stubbornness brands you for stupidity-pride is a crime." (Sophocles 680)

At first, Creon does not heed the warning that Teiresias gives to him. With his actions, Creon loses his son, his wife, and his niece. Gilgamesh is just as stubborn, too. His thirst for destroying powerful rulers, such as Humbaba, the guardian of Cedar Forest and the Bull of Heaven, causes Gilgamesh to lose his best friend, Enkidu. Before battling the Bull of Heaven, Enkidu tries to tell Gilgamesh that they should not battle the bull, but Gilgamesh still proceeds with the fight. One last thing that Gilgamesh and Creon have in common is that they both have a tragic flaw. Creon's flaw is that he cannot have his

power challenged. Gilgamesh's flaw is his will for immortality, and that he would stop at nothing to achieve it. To add on to the similarities and differences, another thing to discuss is their faults and strengths.

Creon is the King of Thebes, and he has faults and strengths just like every other ruler. His faults include that he does not listen to anyone, especially the blind prophet Teiresias, because he does not like his power challenged. Another fault would be that he is straightforward with his thoughts, and that could get him into trouble. Lastly, he is stubborn and greedy. Creon's strengths include that he is faithfully loyal to his people and kingdom, wealthy, and powerful. Gilgamesh, like Creon and every other ruler, has faults as well. His faults are that he is arrogant, stubborn, little bit of a trickster, and careless. His strengths are that he is a courageous fighter and strong and powerful. Keeping each ruler's faults, strengths, similarities, and differences in mind, the next thing to discuss is how each ruler stayed in power.

While Creon was stubborn, he remained in power because he cared about the people. He put their needs first and would not want to disappoint them in any way. He did not want to be seen as a wimpy kind, so he put fear into the minds of his people. They obeyed his laws and he kept them in order. He also obeyed his own laws and kept the kingdom in order. Gilgamesh was at first a reckless leader. His careless and reckless persona followed him through his adventures, one in particular being when he lost the immortality plant to the snake. Through this, he changed. " When Gilgamesh had saw what the snake had done, he sat down and wept. He said to the boatman, ' What shall I do now? All my hardships have been for nothing. O Urshanabi, <https://assignbuster.com/creon-and-gilgamesh-essay-sample/>

was it for this that my hands have labored, was it for this that I gave my heart's blood? I have gained no benefit for myself but have lost the marvelous plant to a reptile." (Gilgamesh 33) This revelation Gilgamesh made changed him into a better ruler and a better person. He went home to Uruk and became a wise and fair king. Taking all of that into account, the final thing to discuss would be the lessons the authors are teaching by portraying the rulers in these manners.

Sophocles portrayed Creon as such a ruler to show that even kings make mistakes. It shows that power can be overwhelming and can make one blind to everything that is happening around them. It can cloud one's judgment and can force to make rash decisions with severe consequences in the end. Because of this, Creon lost his wife, son, and niece, and has to live with the guilt and sorrow for the rest of his life. Even though he had a change of heart, it was too late to do anything about it. It is better to trust family over power. There is no author for Gilgamesh because it is based on the historical King Gilgamesh of Uruk around 2700 b. c. e.

His story was passed on orally through the times until someone finally wrote it down. But his story teaches that because Gilgamesh is human, he has flaws and is limited. Because he sought out immortality, it cost him the life of his best friend and his own fate. He was careless and reckless with his friend's life and his own. And in the end, it changed him. It showed that he became a better ruler. Gilgamesh got immortality through his story. His adventures taught him to appreciate what he has and not what everyone else has. He became more responsible and lost his arrogance. Gilgamesh became a fair and wise man, and he brought that out to rule his kingdom.

In conclusion, Gilgamesh tells the "... Story of how a man became civilized, how he learns to rule himself and therefore his people and to act with temperance, wisdom, and pity" (Mitchell 7). Antigone tells the story of a cruel leader who, when he loses everything, becomes a different man, filled with sorrow and guilt. Creon and Gilgamesh are considered ruthless leaders. They rule their kingdoms both differently and the same, they both have faults and strengths and how those go into how they remain in power, and how the authors of the stories produce lessons that can be learned by each ruler. Creon is highly concerned with upholding the law in the kingdom, cruel, and stubborn. Gilgamesh is also stubborn, careless, and has no regards with his kingdom. They both have tragic flaws; Gilgamesh seeks immortality and would stop at nothing to get it and Creon cannot have his power challenged.

The two rulers have faults and strengths, just like everyone else, and they use them to remain in power. The lessons that can be taught from Creon are that power can make one blind and cloud their judgment. Also, that even kings make mistakes and that one should trust family over power. The lessons that can be taught from Gilgamesh are that because we are human, we have flaws. It also taught that being careless can have severe consequences, but it can also change who that person is into a better man or woman. Another lesson that is taught is that one should appreciate everything he or she has and not get caught up in what they do not have. These two great stories, The Epic of Gilgamesh and Sophocles' Antigone, are not just for entertainment. They provide lessons that can still be relevant, even in the world today.