

Antigone vs Creon Tragic Hero

Examining the traits listed below, find textual evidence throughout the play that proves this character's status as a tragic hero.

1. A person of high estate
2. Suffers because of hamartia
3. Experiences strong emotions and comes to a breaking point
4. Faces a horrible truth (catastrophe)
5. Reversal of fortune (paripateia)
6. The fall and the revelation

3rd Period

Antigone

1. A person of high estate
 - "You would think we had suffered enough for the curse of Oedipus"* (Prologue)
 - Get connection to Oedipus (remember, original audience would know the Oedipus myth)
 - Princess of Thebes
2. Suffers because of hamartia
 - "Ismene, I am going to bury him...Creon is not strong enough to stand in the way"*
 - Overconfident, does not think Creon can stop her
3. Experiences strong emotions and comes to a breaking point
 - "Then let me go since all of your words are bitter" (scene iv)
 - See her fearing death, asking for pity (conflicts with what we saw in scene 2)
 - Chorus offers her no pity; she did it of her own free will

 - "That must be your excuse I suppose because for me I must bury the brother I love"
 - Initially wants to bury him out of respect, but now that Ismene refuses to do it, it is a mission for her. Her breaking point because now she is even more determined to break the law.

 - "She had made a noose of her fine linen veil and hanged herself" (exodus)
 - Her death could also be the breaking point because she committed suicide; she took matters into her own hands; didn't want to suffer.
4. Faces a horrible truth (catastrophe)
 - "I am here to join you, take my share of punishment" (Ismene, scene ii)
 - Ismene wants to die with Antigone; Ismene tries to take her honor
 - Antigone realizes that she will actually be punished.

 - "You know your orders, take her to the vault"
 - Being sentenced to death; faces her reality
5. Reversal of fortune (paripateia)
 - "I know that two sisters lost two brothers" (Prologue)*
 - Fell from happiness because of the deaths of her brothers
6. The fall and the revelation
 - "She had made a noose of her fine linen veil and hanged herself"* (exodus)
 - Final consequence of her hamartia
 - No revelation

Sympathy: Yes or No?

No – she is only considering what she wants, not worried about the rest of her family (Ismene)

Yes – she is young and she has lost all of her family except Ismene

****We each have our own opinions, BUT in considering the original audience, they would have found her to be sympathetic.**

Creon

1. A person of high estate
Scene I, “I have next in blood have succeeded to the full power of the throne”
- Presents himself as king after death of E and P
2. Suffers because of hamartia
Scene 3, “do you want me to show myself weak before the people or to break my sworn word, no the woman dies”
- Hamartia=stubborn, **hubris**, overly concerned about what the people think about him; doesn’t want to be taken advantage of, fears anarchy

Scene 1, Line 110, “is it your senile opinion that the gods love to honor bad men”
- shows his disrespect for both the chorus and the gods
- believes what he is doing is just, but is ignoring the fact that he is breaking their cultural traditions and violating the laws of the gods
3. Experiences strong emotions and comes to a breaking point
Scene v Line 100, “it is hard to deny the heart, I will not do it, I will not fight with destiny”
- Chorus convinces him to have a change of heart and seeks to right his wrong
4. Faces a horrible truth (catastrophe)
“All my civil wisdom, Haemon, my son, so young to die...”
-Finally realizing what he has done, everything is his fault
5. Reversal of fortune (paripateia)
“Is there no pity for me and you...your words are death again...can it be true...as death bread death”
-His situation is reversed; he was confident and had pride, now he is in sorrow

“That is true, it troubles me it is hard to give in but it is worse to risk everything for stubborn pride”
-Realizes what is pride has put in jeopardy; wants to correct his mistakes
6. The fall and the revelation
-Exodus, “I’ve killed my son and wife . . . it has brought all my pride . . . whatever my hands have touched...”
-shows both fall and revelation b/c son and wife are dead, and in the wake of losing everything, realizes he is the one to blame

Sympathy: Yes or No?

- No: all of his problems are the result of his own doing
- Yes: at the end he loses everything even **AFTER** he tries to correct his mistake

Original audience would have found him sympathetic

2nd Period

Antigone

1. A person of high estate
-line 15-16, prologue, “Creon buried our brother Eteocles with military honors, gave him a soldier’s funeral”
- Eteocles = former king, Antigone’s brother

-scene ii, “surely this captive woman is the **princess Antigone**”

2. Suffers because of hamartia
 - line 35, "Creon is not strong enough to stand in my way" (prologue)
 - nothing can stand in her way; reflects her **hubris** b/c she thinks she can do anything
3. Experiences strong emotions and comes to a breaking point
 - lines 50-55, scene iv, "neither love nor lamentation; no song but silence...dirges and planned lamentations could put off death, men would be singing forever"
 - repeating lamentation = expression of grief
 - breaking point with Creon; they are done fighting and arguing
 - prologue, "that must be your excuse I suppose, but as for me I will bury the brother I love"
 - basis of everything, this initiates her suffering
4. Faces a horrible truth (catastrophe)
 - scene iv – "And my reward is death before my time!"
 - audience holds out hope that perhaps she won't die, this finalizes her punishment; Creon is following through on his decree
 - Antigone's realization
 - prologue 20-22 "no one shall bury him, no one mourn for him..."
 - this is her spiral down; as a sister she can't let this happen
 - she acts upon the motivation of this situation
5. Reversal of fortune (paripateia)
 - "she had made a noose of her fine linen veil and hanged herself" (exodus)
 - ultimately, her demise; she got to bury her brother but still dies for breaking the law
6. The fall and the revelation
 - line 75-76, exodus "his bride in the house of the dead"
 - the death of Antigone and Haemon; her death leads to his death
 - No revelation, makes her death more tragic b/c still has her tragic flaw, never develops as a character and realizes her flaws

Creon

1. A person of high estate
 - "these are my principles..." (31-32, scene i)
 - making the laws for Thebes
 - "unfortunately, as you know the princes Eteocles and Polyneices have killed each other in battle and I have succeeded to the full power of the throne" (scene i)
 - Creon's rightful place as king b/c of E and P's deaths
2. Suffers because of hamartia
 - Scene iii, Haemon's speech – you are being **unreasonable**, the people whisper about you, extended metaphor of the tree bending; **hubris**
 - If Creon doesn't find a balance of rule and leniency/compromise then everything will fall apart
 - **Creon genuinely thinks his actions are good for the people
3. Experiences strong emotions and comes to a breaking point
 - 134-136, "I have killed my son and my wife; my comfort lies here dead"
 - he has lost everything and feels he has no reason left to live
 - extreme sorrow
4. Faces a horrible truth (catastrophe)
 - 94-95, "surely a god has crushed me beneath the hugest weight of heaven" (exodus)
 - realizes his actions killed his wife, son, and niece
 - he was being selfish and suffered the consequences
5. Reversal of fortune (paripateia)

-134-136, "I have killed my son and my wife; my comfort lies here dead"

6. The fall and the revelation

"Nothing you say can touch me anymore. My own blind heart has brought me from darkness to final darkness"
(exodus, lines 86-88)

-Creon realizes he should have recognized both P.O.V. on his declaration

4th Period

Antigone

1. A person of high estate

- "surely the captive woman is the **princess Antigone**" (scene ii, line 1)

- clearly IDs her as the princess of Thebes

- "I suppose she'll plead family ties" (scene iii)

- showing familial connection to Creon

2. Suffers because of hamartia

- flaw = loyalty to Polyneices, "I shall lay down with him and death and I shall be as dear to him as he to me"

- her loyalty to him is greater to her than following the law

- "but I will bury him and if I must die I will say this crime is holy"

- flaw = stubbornness

- won't listen to anyone else's advice; compromise might have saved her life

3. Experiences strong emotions and comes to a breaking point

- breaking point = self pity; doesn't want to die, "look upon me friends and pity me" – to the Chorus in scene iv

- finally realizes she will die; first time she wasn't proud of what she did, perhaps regrets her decision because she will die

4. Faces a horrible truth (catastrophe)

- Antigone hangs herself, "made a noose of her linen veil"

- has to accept that there is not going to be an escape; she is trapped

- "she wept and cried on heaven, damned the hands that done this"

- seeing her brothers body after the sentries have uncovered it

5. Reversal of fortune (paripateia)

- Decision to bury Polyneices. If she doesn't bury him, then none of this happens

- "Oedipus died everyone hating him ... our two brothers died"

- family suffering, curse of Oedipus

6. The fall and the revelation

- The fall = "unhappy daughter of a line of kings"

- see change in her status from princess to prisoner

No revelation

Creon

1. A person of high estate

- pg 1074, line 17 "I as the next in blood have succeeded to the full power of the throne"*

- he is the king

2. Suffers because of hamartia

- pg 1088, line 126 "do you want me to **show myself weak before the people** or break my sworn word"

- flaw = stubborn, refuses to change, wants to present himself as a strong king

- pg 1084, line 115 "an enemy is an enemy"

- flaw = pride, ego, stubbornness

3. Experiences strong emotions and comes to a breaking point

- pg 1104 "When Creon saw him the tears rushed to his eyes"

- Seeing Antigone and Haemon dead; he cries

4. Faces a horrible truth (catastrophe)
 "Haemon is dead and the hand that killed him is his own" (119, exodus)
 -end of his bloodline – no heirs!
5. Reversal of fortune (paripateia)
6. The fall and the revelation

5th Period

Antigone

1. A person of high estate
 -Antigone = princess of Thebes, "You would think we had already suffered enough for the curse on Oedipus"
 - connects her to Oedipus (former king)
2. Suffers because of **hamartia – tragic flaw**
 -flaw = disrespect for civil law, scene 1, line 31-32, "Ismene I am going to bury him, will you come," "You have just said the new law forbids it"
 - she didn't second guess burying her brother; lack of hesitation shows lack of respect for the punishment. Divine law > Civil Law (in this circumstance)
3. Experiences strong emotions and comes to a breaking point
 - scene 1, 17-20, 31 "Polyneices fought just as bravely and died just as horribly..."
 - distraught over Creon's lack of respect for her brother
 - breaking point: determined to carry out her mission
4. Faces a horrible truth (catastrophe)
 -"Oh tomb vaulted ...eternal rock"
 -her realization she can't escape death
5. Reversal of fortune (paripateia)
 - commits suicide, "made a noose of her linen veil"
 - this is where Antigone reaches her lowest point
6. The fall and the revelation
 The fall: scene 2, when she is arrested: princess to prisoner
 *No revelation
 - this makes her death more tragic because Creon does change his mind; she could have been saved
 OR
 -we feel less sympathy because she had moments where she could repent but was stubborn and refused to acknowledge her role

Creon

1. A person of high estate
 "I as the next in blood have succeeded to the full power of the throne" (scene i)**
 - the logic of why he is king
2. Suffers because of hamartia
 Scene 1, line 105-107, "the gods, intolerable, why would the gods favor"
 - Flaw = pride, doesn't think the gods would question his ruling as a king
3. Experiences strong emotions and comes to a breaking point
 - Breaking point could be tied to his paripateia and revelation
4. Faces a horrible truth (catastrophe)
 "Haemon, my son, so young to die...I was a fool"
 -Realizes his son had good advice; Creon was wrong and should have listened to Haemon
5. Reversal of fortune (paripateia)
6. The fall and the revelation
 "I have been **rash** and **foolish**. I have **killed my son** and **my wife**"
 -Both fall and revelation: sees the consequences of his actions
 -Fall: no family, perhaps no community support, **no heir**
 Sympathy for Creon: Yes or No?
 - Yes, Creon tries to right his wrongs, but his timing was off.
 - Yes, he wasn't being terrible on purpose