

IDEAS 4 (Set 2)

Analysis: Lit - Antigone.True Tragic Hero

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY:

This paper shows a depth of understanding about the text, but the complexity and nuance of thought are not particularly strong throughout, preventing it from scoring a 5. The reader has a strong sense that the reader was set up for success in the prompt given by the teacher, and the writer did not do much analysis beyond plugging in his or her answer (albeit successfully) to the framework already provided. (The prompt clearly gives the definition of a tragic hero and asks the writer to prove which character fits the description most closely; the writer neglects to go much beyond proving that Creon is the tragic hero because he “controls his own fate.”)

CRITERION 1: QUALITY

The overall concept of a tragic hero controlling his or her own fate (and the subsequent accurate analysis of the characters) shows a depth of understanding, which gets stronger as the paper progresses. In the first body paragraph, the observation that Ismene is “the only remaining family member”—an example of her suffering—is a nuanced observation. The second body paragraph observes that Haemon’s death seems to fit the classic description of a tragic hero because he “dies beside his bride,” but because this was put into motion by his father’s mistakes, it was not under Haemon’s control (despite the fact that he committed suicide). Therefore, he cannot be a tragic hero. This idea shows an analysis of a subtle distinction. However, these nuanced observations do not dominate the paper. The paper is fairly repetitive and slides into plot summary at times.

CRITERION 2: SUBSTANTIATION

The main position (that Creon is the tragic hero) is substantiated throughout the paper. Each paragraph proves or disproves why a certain character is a tragic hero, and leads nicely to the final body paragraph about Creon. However, this paper can not score a five, because there are clear opportunities to analyze opposing arguments that the writer does not take. (For example, the writer could set up a premise in which he explains why some actions by *another* character might be considered those of a tragic hero, but then disproves them based on a nuanced analysis: “Antigone is many a reader’s choice for tragic hero because of the grisly and expressive way she commits suicide; however, hidden behind her tragic bravado lies the root cause of her death: Creon’s decree. With Creon as the chief orchestrator of the main catalyst for the play’s events, he ultimately controls the fate of his family and is the main tragic hero.”)

Essay: Lit - Antigone. True Tragic Hero

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English I

January 24, 2006

The True Tragic Hero

At the soul of every classic tragic play is suffering and a tragic hero. Ordinary suffering can be caused ^{specifically - whose?} mainly by death but also by mistakes a character makes, and other things the character loses like relationships and material items. All of the characters will usually feel some degrees of sufferings but none ^{is} are as great as the suffering of the tragic hero. The tragic hero faces not only the death of some of those close to him and mistakes he makes but a great ^{as well} downfall. The tragic hero is usually born as a noble but because of his mistakes suffers a great ^{the} downfall and ^{the} deaths of those close to him; he controls his fate. Usually this suffering leads to a suicide by the tragic hero or the tragic hero becomes secluded and usually ends up dying. The tragedy *Antigone* is no different; each character suffers but only one tragic hero falls from his

place and suffers the most because of the choices he makes. ^{Each of the three characters,} Ismene,

Haemon and Creon ^{need to be specified in each of the topic sentences} suffer greatly because of death and a set fate but only one is the tragic hero

^{because he controls his fate, bringing on his own great fall} and many mistakes that cause the ^{can be included/explained in it for} sufferings of those around him along with himself ^{tragic hero.}

^{once I am the ruler and am familiar with the play.} Ismene, the sister of Antigone, ^{specify} suffers greatly because of the curse her father has placed

^{is} upon the family by ^{is} accidentally marrying his mother. This curse causes her entire family to die

^{in various ways} leaving Ismene with great suffering as the only remaining family member ^{After}

^{no time language - would summary.} her two brothers kill each other she suffers greatly because her brother Polynices, "is not to be buried" (127). This disrespect and disregard for traditions and honor ^{is what} causes some of

Ismene's suffering. When Ismene finds out that Antigone is sentenced to death for burying her brother she tries to die along with Antigone claiming, "I am as much to blame as she is" (140). By ^{speaking} ^{time} ~~doing this~~ she is ^{expressing} ^{feeling} her sorrow but is denied her death and forced to bear her sister's, leaving Ismene as the only remaining family member. Ismene's ^{which was what?} great fall from nobility, her mistake of not helping her sister bury Polynices, and the great suffering she has to endure after having to watch her sister die are some ^{there are experiences - events, but not characteristics} characteristics of a tragic hero, although she does not quite fit the part because these are mostly caused by her father's curse; she does not control her fate.

^{This topic sentence needs work on form - better this and the previous topic sentence to be about someone else other than the named character.}
Haemon, the son of Creon, ^{and} suffers greatly from his father's mistakes. He suffers greatly when he finds out his fiancée, Antigone, is going to be killed, he even tries to change Creon's mind, something no one in the city dared to do, "Only because I know you are wrong, wrong / What sort of respect tramples on all that is holy?" (146). ^{At this point} he is ^{trying to express} his sorrow, but his father's mistake ^{his mistake ignores him?} dampens him by ignoring him. His despair ^{soon} drives him to

take his own life so that he can be with his bride in death. When Creon tells him he must watch

Antigone die, Haemon responds, "That sight I'll never see. Nor from this hour / shall you see me again" (147). This expression of sorrow shows Haemon's noble aspects and the extent to which

he suffers. Haemon's tragic end seems to fit perfectly with what Aristotle would define as a

tragic hero; his suffering leads him to die beside his bride, waiting till Creon was in sight before stabbing himself with his sword. But Haemon's death was not caused by his own mistakes but those of his father, which excludes him from being the tragic hero. Haemon does not control his

own fate.

^{over to a true topic sentence, it still needs to be more specific.}
Creon, the king of Thebes, falls from his place and suffers his family's death because of ^{Specify} his own mistakes. One of these mistakes is his failure to honor Polynices with a burial. Creon

also is too prideful, "No other touchstone can test the heart of man, / the temper of his mind and spirit, till he be tried / in the practice of authority and rule." (131). He considers himself higher than all the others which could possibly be his biggest mistake. Sentencing Antigone to death is also a mistake that leads to his downfall. [This act]angers his son which causes Haemon to go to dire measures to avenge his father. Creon finally realizes his mistake when the blind prophet, Teiresias, shows it to him, "Pay to the dead his due. Wound not the fallen. / It is no glory to kill and kill again." (153). Creon is finally able to see that Polynices deserves his respect, and without it Creon is doomed. He immediately goes to bury Polynices but his fate is sealed and he is forced to witness his son dying because of the mistakes Creon has made. When informing his wife of the news she in turn kills herself. His own mistakes cause his own downfall along with those around him. Creon's great fall, pride, sorrow, and mainly his control over his fate are the characteristics that fit with Aristotle's view of the tragic hero.

Creon most closely fits with Aristotle's definition of a tragic hero because of his mistakes, his pride, his great downfall, and his suffering. He does realize his mistakes as he nears the end but it is already too late to repair what he did. But according to Aristotle's view on tragic heroes it is not just those characteristics that make the hero; it is his control over his own destiny. Creon controlled his own fate through his actions and pride and is therefore the tragic hero of Antigone. A tragic hero does not suffer because of the mistakes of those around him or because of destiny, he suffers because of himself. to humanity in general?

On my honor, I have not violated the honor code in any way on this work. Patricia Ford

St. John's School, 9th grade English, Antigone essay