SHAKESPEARE Essay, Research Paper

Julius\_Caesar\_Tragic\_Hero\_as\_a By: blueye3 Julius Caesar as a Tragic Hero Julius Caesar is a play written by William Shakespeare during the year 1597. Julius Caesar?s story involves a conspiracy against Julius Caesar, a powerful senator. The play involves a highly respected senator, Brutus, who decides to join the conspiracy to kill Julius Caesar, in the effort to keep democracy intact. Brutus believes that if Julius Caesar is allowed to live, Caesar will take a kingship and turn the government into a monarchy. Brutus, Cassius, and the other conspirators kill Julius Caesar, yet they find Antony, a loyalist of Caesar, seeks revenge on them. Plato set out rules on the traits a tragic hero must possess. A tragic hero must neither be an evil villain nor a great hero, instead the tragic hero must be either a flawed hero or a villain with some good traits. Also, the tragic hero must not deserve what mighty punishment is dealt to him. Another key feature of a tragic hero is the fact that a tragic hero must be a high-standing individual in society. The tragic hero must not deserve his punishment for the play to be a tragedy. Also, a tragedy happening to someone in high authority, will affect not only the single person but also society as a whole. Another reason for the tragic hero to be in high authority is to display that if a tragedy may happen to someone such as a king, it may just as easily happen to any other person. Julius Caesar fits the role of a tragic hero. Julius Caesar is a high standing senator that possesses hamartia, failings of human nature. Julius Caesar?s imperfections may be seen in three distinct aspects of Caesar, such as the following: his pride, his vacillation, and his ambition. Julius Caesar has much pride, a hamartia, which brings him to not be wary of the conspiracy. Caesar is given much warning on the threat of his life, yet due to his pride he thinks himself to be too great of a person to have such a downfall. Julius Caesar is warned by a soothsayer, ?Soothsayer. Beware the ides of March.?(1,2,18) Julius Caesar rebukes the soothsayer by stating, ?Caesar. He is a dreamer. Let us leave him. Pass.?(1,2,23) Caesar does not take warning to be wary the middle of the month, the day of his assassination. Later, Caesar?s wife Calpurnia has a nightmare that Caesar is slain at the Capitol. Caesar calls for the priests to do a sacrifice to see if it is wise to stay or leave for the Capitol. The priests warn Caesar not to leave out of the house and Calpurnia pleads with him also. Caesar?s pride is shown by his response, ?Caesar. ?Danger knows full well that Caesar is more dangerous than he. We are two lions littered in one day, And I the elder and more terrible, And Caesar shall go forth.?(2,2,44-47) Caesar shows that his pride overrules any advice given by others. If not for Julius Caesar?s pride, he may have avoided the assassination and had more time for the conspiracy to be uncovered. This clearly shows that Caesar?s pride is a hamartia that leads to his downfall. Julius Caesar vacillates, or changes, his mind throughout the play and this downfall is shown to be one of Caesar?s hamartias. On the day Caesar is to go to the Capitol, he changes his decisions frequently. Caesar defies the warnings of Calpurnia and the priests and Caesar says that she, Caesar, shall go forth to the Capitol this day. ?Caesar. Caesar shall forth. The things that threatened me Ne?er looked but on my back. When they shall see The face of Caesar, they are vanished.? Through this quotation, it seems Caesar has made his mind to go forth to the Capitol. Calpurnia, though, is able to persuade him to stay home and send word that he is sick. Caesar replies, ?Caesar. Mark Antony shall say I am not well, And for thy humour I will stay at home.?(2,2,55-56) Decius then flatters Caesar and is able to persuade him that Calpurnia?s nightmare is misinterpreted and that he should go forth to the Capitol. To this, Caesar replies, ?Calpuria. How foolish do your fears seem now, Calpurnia!?(2,2,105-106) Caesar decides finally to leave for the Capitol, where he is murdered later the same day. This clearly shows that the change-ability of Caesar, due to flattery and the influence of others, is also a hamartia. Caesar is very ambitious, for this is the reason he is murdered by Brutus. Caesar looks to further himself and he has much pride. Julius Caesar shows that he may be dangerous with power and power is what Caesar is trying to acquire. Brutus is wary of Caesar getting power and possibly setting up a monarchy. The other conspirators are jealous of Caesar and his rise in power. They are senators also, yet see that they are losing their power and authority and that Caesar is grasping for more ruling. This occurrence, that Caesar is surpassing his peers and creating a monopoly, is a very dangerous and serious threat. Cassius expresses his opinion by his statement, ?Cassius. ?but for my single self, I had lief not be as live to be in awe of such a thing as I myself. I was borne free as Caesar; so were you.?(1,2,94-97) Cassius also shows that he sees that the Senate and senators are falling in power as Caesar is selfishly acquiring it. ?Casca. He fell down in the market place and foamed at the mouth and was speechless. Brutus. ?Tis very like; he hath the falling sickness. Cassius. No, Caesar hath it blueye3 not; but you and I, and honest Casca, we have the falling sickness [in reference to their falling in power versus Caesar?s rise].?(1,2,254-258) Caesar?s ambition, surely, is a hamartia and is the reason behind the heart of the conspiracy. Through these examples, Julius Caesar can be seen as having the traits of a tragic hero. Upon closer inspection, Brutus is the real tragic hero of the play. This displays how William Shakespeare is able to create realistic and multipurpose characters that inspire his works. Bibliography Julius Caesar works edition Word Count: 1026