Antigone And Creon’s Similarit Essay, Research Paper

In Sophocles play, Antigone, two main characters with strong personalities emerge: Antigone and Creon. In the beginning of the play, Antigone s brothers Polyneices and Eteocles have been slain by each other s swords in battle. Creon, the king of Thebes, has made a decree stating that Eteocles shall be given an honorable burial for his service to the city, while Polyneices will be given no burial because he is considered a traitor the city of Thebes. In ancient times, if a person died and was not given a proper burial, then their spirit would not be able to pass into Hades. Because of this, Antigone is determined to give her brother a proper burial. At the same time, Creon is determined that no one will bury Polyneices and anyone who tries will be condemned to death. Although Creon and Antigone have conflicting points of view, their character traits are similar and eventually lead to their own demise.

First of all, both Creon and Antigone are very independent individuals. In the beginning of the play, Antigone asks her sister Ismene to help her bury their brother and Ismene refuses. After that Antigone decides to act independently, saying to Ismene, “I should not want you, even if you asked to come./ But I will bury him;” (Sophocles 54, 56) She does not care if anyone is willing to assist her in burying Polyneices, she is willing to do it on her own in spite of the consequences. Creon is similarly independent. When his son, Haimon, comes to talk with him

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about condemning Antigone to death for what she has done, he refuses to listen. Creon acts independently by condemning Antigone to death despite the pleas of his son and of the community.

Creon and Antigone are also loyal to their own beliefs of which laws should be more important: the laws of the state or the laws of the gods. Creon s loyalty is to the laws of the state. After he made the decree to condemn anyone who buried Polyneices to death, he refused to change it even though it meant condemning his own niece, Antigone. Creon is so blinded by his loyalty to the laws of the state that he fails to see that he is disobeying the laws of the gods: the law that the dead must be given a proper burial. On the other hand, Antigone s loyalty is to the laws of the gods. Aware of the consequences of her actions, she decides to give her brother a proper burial so he will be able to pass into the underworld. This shows that Antigone s loyalty is to the gods and not to the state.

Another similarity that Antigone and Creon share is their unwillingness to listen to reason. Ismene reminds Antigone of the consequences of burying their brother and tries to persuade her into not doing it by adding, “Think how much more terrible than these/ Our own death would be if we should go against Creon/ And do what he has forbidden!” (Sophocles 44-46). Even after Ismene s plea, Antigone will not listen to reason. She is determined to give her brother Polyneices a proper burial. Creon is equally unwilling to listen to reason. He is unwilling to listen to the pleas of his son to let Antigone live. Creon replies to the pleas of his son by saying, “Do you want me to show myself weak before the people?” (Sophocles 26). Creon believes that if he

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changes his decree, his subjects will see him as a weak ruler, therefore he is unwilling to listen to the reasoning of his son.

Stubbornness is the main characteristic that Creon and Antigone share and it is the one that ultimately leads to their downfall. Antigone refuses to listen to the reasoning of her sister and alienates Ismene by telling her, “Go away Ismene:/ I shall be hating you soon,”(Sophocles 78-79).

Later in the play, Ismene tries to say that she is guilty along with her sister for the burial of their brother. Antigone retorts, “No Ismene. You have no right to say so./ You would not help me, and I will not have you help me.” (Sophocles 132-133). This shows the stubbornness and arrogance Antigone feels about her actions. She too stubborn to accept help and it essentially leads to her own demise. Antigone commits suicide in her cell that Creon sentenced her to stay in. Creon s stubbornness comes out when he is talking with the prophet, Teirsesias. Teirsesias warns Creon that if he does not free Antigone, bad things will happen. Creon is too stubborn to believe that his decree will lead to the downfall that Teirsesias speaks of. In return Creon states that his old friend and prophet has “sold out” (Sophocles 65). Although Teirsesias has never been wrong, Creon is so stubborn that he refuses to listen, claiming that Teiresias has been corrupted by money and so his pride hampers his good judgment. In a similar manner, when Haimon tells Creon that he should not condemn Antigone to death, Creon becomes outraged at his son for standing up for Antigone. Creon lashes out at him, calling him an “adolescent fool! Taken in by a woman” (Sophocles 114). Haimon is deeply hurt by this and in turn goes to Antigone s cell. When his father finds him, Haimon is so outraged at him that he tries to kill Creon, and then turns

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the sword on himself. Stubbornness of the characters Antigone and Creon led to tragedy for each of them.

Although Antigone and Creon have conflicting points of view in Sophocles play, Antigone, both are remarkably similar in their personality traits. Ironically, they are both so similar that they cannot see it. Flaws that they share make neither of them willing to listen to the other, which is what eventually leads to the tragic ending in Antigone.