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English Per. 0

15 December 2003

### A Pride That Killed

A person's pride can drive him to not only ruin his own life, but the lives of others. In the Greek play *Antigone* by Sophocles, Antigone and Creon, the tragic heroes, have to find reason in each other. All too late, they swallow their pride and admit their flaws. This is when these two prideful characters have their biggest quarrel, which leads to their own downfall and the death of everyone they love.

When Creon makes his first decree, the pride and fear of betrayal that he has inside are evident. Creon's fear that someone will try to overthrow him shows through in his first speech when he talks about the importance of being loyal to the state over being loyal to family. He states, "I find intolerable the man who puts his country/Second to his friend" (171). Creon has a firm belief that what he is doing is right by the gods, and especially right by the law. This is where Creon's tragic flaw, pride, shows through.

The Choragos is convinced that the gods find that it would be wrong not to bury Polyneices. Creon says, "Enough! You make me furious with such senile doddering remarks. Insufferable! You really think they care 'two hoots', the gods, about this corpse?" (174). This shows that he will not listen to the opinions of others, even if they represent the state. That is one of the first times that Creon's ignorance from pride shows through.

When Antigone is caught and brought to Creon, her own pride and the fact that someone of his own blood has betrayed him, causes his anger to continue to make him blinder from pride.

Creon tells his son, Haemon, "Let us then defend authority and not be ousted by a girl. If yield we must, then better yield to a man, than have it said that we were worsted by a woman" (187). Here, Creon sees himself as being above females. Because of his pride, he does not want anyone to think that he is weaker than a girl, by letting Antigone go free. This causes even more ignorance, so that he will not even listen to his own son's advice. If he had listened to his son more carefully, he would understand what the general opinion of the citizens is, and perhaps he would rethink his stance.

When Haemon tells his father that he is wrong and needs to open his mind to other opinions, Creon does exactly the opposite. Creon says, "You mean that men of my years have to learn by taking notes from men of his?" This demonstrates that he thinks that he is wiser than anyone else. But by saying that older men are wiser, he is being hypocritical (189). He would not listen to the elders of Thebes because they were too old and, therefore, did not really know what they were talking about. Haemon even tells Creon, "All right then: make remarks and never listen to an answer!" (190), trying to make him aware that he listens to no other opinion. But Creon thinks that because Haemon is his son, Haemon should agree with him. However, Haemon does not agree with him, and once again the fact that someone of his own blood has turned against him only angers him more.

Creon also is blinded by the fear that someone will try to overthrow him. This causes him to think that if someone is openly against him, it is because he has been bribed to do so. Creon no longer trusts anyone but himself and will not even listen to the prophet, Tiresias, such as when Creon says, "The most reverend fall from grace, when lies are sold wrapped up in honeyed words" (199). Creon tries to insinuate that Tiresias has been bribed into trying to talk Creon into letting Antigone go. Creon also does this another time when the Sentry comes to tell him about

Polyneices' body. He accuses the Sentry of being bribed into burying the body and telling Creon a false story about it (174). He blames the wrong people and makes an obvious error in judgment. The Sentry cries, "Oh! What can one do when even right reason reasons wrong?" (175). This mistake is all due to Creon's pride and anger.

Antigone is the second tragic hero in the play. Not only does she know that what she does is right, but she wants everyone to give her the credit for it. She wants people to see that she is not afraid of death or of going against Creon. She says, "And I, whom no man's frown can frighten, am far from risking Heaven's frown by flouting these" (179). Antigone's pride does not make her ignorant, like Creon's does, but boastful and stubborn. What she did was right and brave, but she wanted all the credit and glory she could get from it. The reader sees this when she refuses her sister credit for her crime by saying, "The dead of Hades knows whose act it was. I do not take to those who take to talk" (182).

It is not until the end that these two characters swallow their pride and truly realize what they have done. Antigone finally realizes the consequences of her actions when it is time for her to be locked in her vault. She is not as eager to die for her protest as she was before. Instead of seeing herself glorified, she asks the people not to laugh at her. She sees herself clearly now: "No one at my side/ No one to regret,/ Uncelebrated love/ Is all I have for my last walk." Creon finally admits to being wrong and ignorant the whole time when he says, "It's hard to eat my words and harder still to risk catastrophe through stubborn pride" (201). By the time he realizes this, Antigone has already hanged herself, and her death causes Haemon to also commit suicide. The tragic death of these people also causes Creon's wife, Eurydice, to also kill herself, leaving Creon left alive, and his pride destroyed.

If Creon had not had his pride, the fate of everyone would have changed. He would have

been able to listen to everyone around him and open his mind, especially to his son. If he had realized that what he thought was wrong, Antigone would have not been sentenced to death. If Antigone had been less prideful, things would have also changed. Creon gave her an opportunity to speak for herself and prove her innocence. Instead, she gladly admitted to committing the crime and proudly announced it in public. If she had been more submissive, and had not wanted glory for her actions, she could have saved her own life and the lives of others.

Antigone's and Creon's pride caused two different reactions. Antigone wanted to be glorified, while Creon was ignorant. They both were conceited at times, and they thought better of themselves than of anyone else. While Antigone's actions were right, they would have been truly from the heart if she had not tried to glorify herself and expect everyone to sympathize her. In the end, they both receive their consequences for their actions, but their pride also takes the lives of several innocent people that they love.