

Pride in antigone and in whale rider

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Pride can be seen in both positive and negative ways. It can mean that one has self-respect, but it can also mean that one is arrogant and has a huge ego. The negative side of pride can be seen in both the play *Antigone*, written by Greek playwright Sophocles and the film *Whale Rider*. Both stories have multiple characters that are different but share the same personalities. In *Antigone*, Antigone buries her brother despite Creon's new law forbidding anyone from burying him. Due to his pride, he is forced to sentence Antigone to death even though they are family. *Whale Rider* tells the story of a twelve year old child named Paikea (Pai) attempting to show her grandfather and leader of the tribe, Koro, that she is fit to be the new leader, but Koro continues to neglect her because she is a girl. In both stories, the two men display a huge lack of respect towards women and allow their pride to control their decisions. Although both Creon and Koro discount women throughout their respective stories, their differing attitudes at the end of both stories develop from their distinct ways of acknowledging their pride; Creon is unable to overcome his pride, leading to Antigone's death, and Koro overcomes his pride to accept Pai as the new leader of the tribe.

Creon's inability to overcome his pride eventually leads to multiple deaths and his failure as both a father and a husband. After he discovers that Antigone disobeyed him by burying Polyneices, he sentences her to death. Here, he is trying to show the citizens of Thebes that he is in control and powerful. Since he had already mentioned that anyone that disregards his law will be stoned to death in his edict, he cannot change his mind just because his niece was the one defied his orders. He knows that the citizens will view him as weak and unfit to be king if he makes rash and hypocritical

decisions. If he is to release Antigone, his citizens will believe that it is acceptable to disobey their king and he is not willing to risk that. This shows that Creon is prepared to kill a family member without hesitation if it means that he will not damage his reputation. Creon continues to believe that he is making the right decision until Antigone kills herself, leading to Haimon's and Eurydice's deaths. He realizes that he has "been rash and foolish" (244) and that his pride and fear of losing the trust of his citizens caused his family to die while cursing him. Creon is forced to suffer the guilt of causing three deaths and loneliness. His need to be the perfect leader ultimately killed his family, never giving him the chance to correct his error in judgement and make everything right again.

Similar to Creon, Koro constantly neglects Pai throughout the film, but unlike Creon, Koro realizes that his pride and arrogance blinded him from the truth and eventually gains the chance to redeem himself. In the beginning, it is clear that Koro hated Pai, because he had already rejected her the second she was born. He believes that because Pai is a girl, she is incapable of becoming the leader that he wants. However, he is proved wrong when he unsuccessfully used a rope to start an engine while Pai easily completed the task. Koro being unable to start the engine while Pai was successful shows that as Pai grows stronger, he is gradually growing weaker. When Koro created the school for leaders, he banned Pai from learning how to use the taiahas because this weapon is generally used by boys. After he discovers that she has been practicing and even defeated Hemi, Koro's strongest student, he is furious, because he is adamant that the new leader will be a man. His stubbornness and pride in having a male chief interferes with the

process of finding a new leader. Koro also refuses to allow the gods to help him. He tells his students that they need to trust their ancestors, but he himself fails to follow his own words, as he is determined to handpick his own leader. This shows that he is not only inflexible but also a hypocrite. Both Creon and Koro are hypocrites and stubborn men, making them similar in character, but the biggest difference between them is that towards the end of the film, Koro is able to mend his relationship with Pai and begin to think open mindedly while Creon's biased attitude remains unchanged until the end of the story.

Despite starting off with similar opinions regarding women and their purpose in society, Koro's ability to concede that he is too prideful ultimately leads to his tribe's success, while Creon's unwillingness to admit to his pride ultimately leads to Antigone's death, triggering his family's downfall. Creon attempts to show the citizens of Thebes that he is in control and that there are no exceptions to his methods of ruling, including family. This causes Antigone as well as the rest of his family to kill themselves because of his biased views and inflexible behavior. Koro is unable to accept Pai as a leader, which delays the process of finding a new chief. However, at the end, he realizes that the gods have already chosen Pai as the new leader and that Pai could be the one that unites the tribe. The fact that even though both stories take place in a society thousands of years apart from each other, their social norms are still the same, where women are constantly being put down and disrespected. It is incredible how pride can both be positive and negative, as it could make one seem self-confident but also too arrogant.

Pride is capable of controlling one's emotions and can ultimately lead to tragedies and misfortunes.