Leadership In Julius Ceasar Essay, Research Paper

In Shakespeare s tragedy Julius Caesar, the use of diverse leaders plays an important role in the plot, showing vividly how strong personalities conflict. This is the case with Brutus and Cassius, the two leaders among the several conspirators. The story of Julius Caesar is set in ancient Rome during a time when Julius Caesar is to become king. This, however, angers Cassius, a nobleman, and he plots with Brutus and others to kill him before he becomes king. They do just that, justifying their actions by saying Caesar was too ambitious and would have gone insane with power. This backfires with the Roman citizens after an emotional speech by Mark Antony, Caesar s right hand man. This forces the conspirators to flee Rome and go to war with Antony and eventually take their own lives. Because of their great leadership qualities, Brutus and Cassius take the leader roles among the conspirators. Nevertheless, they at times do argue over the course of action. Though Brutus and Cassius are both similar in that they are great leaders, their differences in character are instrumental in determining the conclusion of the play.

Despite their differences, Brutus and Cassius have similar traits that give rise to great leaders. Both Brutus and Cassius are noble, intelligent men. They usually have good intentions and understand the situation they are in. This is why they both agree to go along with the conspiracy to kill Caesar. The two also like to think out and plan their actions. They do this two significant times in the play. When the two plan Caesar s assassination and during the planning of the final move for Brutus and Cassius army. When the assassination is developing, Cassius thinks to kill Antony as well as Caesar saying, Mark Antony, so well beloved of Caesar, Should outlive Caesar. We shall find of him A shrewd contriver; and you know his means, If he improve them, may well stretch so far As to annoy us all. Which to prevent, Let Antony and Caesar fall together (2.1.157-162). Brutus, however, responds with his own reasoning, Our course will seen too bloody, Caius Cassius, To cut the head off and then hack at the limbs, Like wrath in death and envy afterwards; For Antony is but a limb of Caesar (2.1.163-166). They two are also self reliant and self-dependent. They can think and act for themselves as they should any great man says Cassius to Brutus, Men at some time are masters of their fates. The fault dear Brutus, is not in our stars, But in ourselves, that we are underlings. (1.2.139-141). These similarities of intelligence, ability to reason, and self dependence in the two make them very good leaders for others in the conspiracy to follow and obey.

The characters of Brutus and Cassius are nevertheless very different in their ability to trust others. Brutus is a very trusting person, almost to the point of being na ve. He usually believes everyone is noble and has good intentions in mind. He doesn t think people can be someone other than what they seem. This is shown with his strong opinion of Antony, And for Mark Antony, think not of him; For he can do no more than Caesar s arm When Caesar s head is off (2.1.181-183). This opinion is very far from the truth as proven in the emotional speech Antony makes following Caesar s death. Cassius, on the other hand, was very much less trusting. He was usually suspicious of others and cautious to act. Cassius is the first to declare Antony will bring the downfall of the conspirators saying, A shrewd contriver; and you know his means, If he improve them, may well stretch so far As to annoy us all (2.1.159-161). He is also against letting Antony speak at Caesar s funeral before the citizens of Rome. His distrust in Antony, but failure to act accordingly, turns out to be a key influence to the play s outcome. He thinks that Mark Antony, as well as with Caesar, can not be trusted to act in agreement with his plans. Brutus overconfidence in others was the ultimate contributor to the conspirators death. During the planning stage of the conspiracy, Brutus is the one who makes the decision not to kill Antony. The rest followed his plan because of his honor, rather than his logic, and therefore not the consequences of his over trusting judgement.

Brutus and Cassius differences in motives are also a precursor to their motives throughout the play. Cassius is a very self-serving; he is loyal to himself above all else. As he states in the early part of the play, Cassius from bondage will deliver Cassius (1.3.90). In the previous scene he convinces Brutus to join the conspiracy by exploiting his honor and nobility. This is obvious when he concludes his argument with, I am glad that my weak words Have struck but thus much show of fire from Brutus (1.2.176-177). Cassius motives for killing Caesar are primarily jealousy and envy, rather than Caesar s ambition, which he uses to convince Brutus. Brutus, in contrast, is very patriotic and loyal to his country and its citizens. Brutus makes his intentions clear right from the start of the conspiracy asserting to Cassius about Caesar, That you do love me, I am nothing jealous (1.2.162). He honestly murdered his friend out of fear of his ambition, as he says in the funeral speech, Brutus love to Caesar was no less that his. If then that friend demand why Brutus rose against Caesar, this is my answer: not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more I honor him, but as he was ambitious, I slew him (3.2.19-22, 26-27). He goes on to promise the crowd when it suits the country for his death, he will do the same to himself (3.2.46-47). This clearly illustrates his priorities when it comes to allegiance, and this is why, in his mind, Caesar had to die. Even after he is forced to flee Rome, he knows he must fight Antony because he is afraid Antony will become a tyrant. The contrasting motives of Brutus and Cassius greatly affected their choices and as a result so were the events leading to their outcome.

Despite the many strong leadership characteristics Brutus and Cassius share, their considerable differences in trust and loyalty are the ultimate factors that influence the conclusion of the play. Both of these characters have great qualities such as intelligence, self-dependence, and reasoning ability that make them excellent leaders. It, however, is their differences that govern the end result of the conspiracy. The single most outstanding decision of the play was when the conspirators resolved not to kill Antony along with Caesar. Brutus overwhelming trust of Antony led him to believe Antony was not going to be a problem. There are many implications of leadership as seen in Julius Caesar. Those who tend to exhibit strong leadership characteristics will have much more impact on those who tend to stand back and fall into the crowd, even if the decisions being made are illogical. When two strong leaders interact, there usually is a disagreement on the course of action, which can be harmful for the group. The strong characters of Brutus and Cassius, and the weaker conspirators, prove both these conclusions.