Bet You Didn’t Know that, Did You?

*Isn’t it peculiar that events, works from centuries ago still find a way to squirm themselves into today’s society?* This realization on how specific masterpieces -- like most of the tales from Greek mythology and Sophocles’s *Antigone* -- have caressed the public’s lives doesn’t appear to grasp most people; however, it’s important to highlight on some aspects of people’s lives that were influenced by these fascinating artworks. A few of these components are in the form of lessons, while others are in the form of revolutionary political movements. A handful are even projected on the big screen; hence, *Star Wars*. *Bet you didn’t know that, did you?* In all, past scribings have more influence on today’s contemporary culture than anyone could ever imagine. *Isn’t that incredible?*

To begin, it’s imperative to cover the basics. Greek mythology seems as if it’s been around since the “big bang” -- it hasn’t, but it appears that way, because Greek mythology delivers explanations for almost all everyday experiences. There are tales that explain the coming of winter, and how certain plagues were exposed to the Earth; nevertheless, all of these stories were used to convey, teach lessons to future generations. These lessons include:

1. *Always* believe in yourself; trust your gut.
2. *Always* have the courage to stand up for what you deem is right -- no matter the disabilities, disadvantages to which you are under.
3. **NEVER** insult a higher power, because karma is a bitch.
4. No matter what, you *are* capable of anything.

Not only are these lessons prevalent in myths; such as, the ones concerning “Dionysus or Bacchus” (Hamilton, 63) and Hercules. The lessons of classic Greek mythology have trickled down into a few pieces of epic literature; like, Sophocles’s *Antigone*. In *Antigone*, Sophocles created a hostile environment where Antigone -- a royal doomed to endure karma from the actions of her father/brother, Oedipus -- was unable to give a proper burial to her other brother, because the King, Creon, wouldn’t allow it. Antigone’s brother was solely a traitor in the eyes of the King, and he was left out to putrefy in the wretched, organic world. Antigone was greatly conflicted with this decree, so she buried him. She accepted her “arrest and execution” (Fagles, Sophocles, 556) and enveloped confidence by standing up for what she deemed was right -- her actions portrayed lesson number two. In all, Creon was determined to punish her, despite the warnings from the gods and his trusted prophet, Tiresias. Creon insulted the gods -- something ancient Greek mythology has warned us never to do by lesson number three listed above. Through the fateful movements of his mouth -- and the wrath of the gods -- Creon lost everything. He lost his son, Antigone, and his wife. On the bright side, Antigone was most likely welcomed by Hades, in the underworld, as a martyr; however, Creon was a fool, and he taught us that “ the mighty words of the proud are paid in full with mighty blows of fate…[that] will teach us wisdom” (Fagles, Sophocles, 1468-1470).

In general, karma is a bitch.

But, Greek mythology and Sophocles's stories weren’t purely for edifying lessons -- they also paved the way for certain political movements. One, in particular, being the feminist movement. Throughout time, women have hardly ever had the same rights as men or been held to the same standards. Women have forever been espied as minorities; nevertheless, they were miraculously not depicted as minorities in Greek mythology. They had power, and the public had every reason to praise, dread them as much as they feared, idolized the male gods. A few powerful female gods were: Athena and Hera. Athena was the goddess of wisdom and battle strategy. It’s ironic that men -- who have it pounded it into them that women are inferior -- would pray to a goddess for aid in the many battles of Grecian time and to grant them wisdom during their hardships. Also, Hera was the goddess of marriage -- another process involving men. Additionally, she had “implacable anger” (Hamilton, 26) towards defiers of marriage, and she was rightfully feared by the lovers of her husband or anyone who attempted adulterous acts. To get the jist, both Athena and Hera were “fierce and ruthless” (Hamilton, 28) -- *why, in a time when women hardly had any rights, would the Greeks give authority, praise to women?* No idea, but the remarkableness of their decisions cannot be overstated.

On the same level, Sophocles scribed *Antigone* with a female protagonist. Yes, a *female* main character. Frankly, that was practically unheard of during that time period, which makes Sophocles super phenomenal. And although this decision was melancholy, Antigone was held to same standards as the rest of the men in the community following her actions to flout the law -- her gender made no difference in her punishment of death. Thinking positively, at least Sophocles achieved equality. Additionally, on the subject of feminism and *Antigone*, *Star Wars* was actually somewhat based on the play, *Antigone*. We could be “chatty Cathys” and discuss the parallels between the characters Antigone and Luke Skywalker for centuries, but the point is this: “*Star Wars* was released in a period...when sexual identities were beginning to be redefined by the Women’s Movement” (Gordon, 1978). This not only explains why the modern myth of *Star Wars* was based off of a female fable, but it also accounts for why Princess Leia (Carrie Fisher) was as sassy, snarky, and strong headed as she was. Right off the bat, she whipped Hans Solo (Harrison Ford) into shape, and she saved everyone’s rearends from the eminent threat of the Empire forces on the Death Star. Furthermore, she was placed on a pedestal as a member of a regal family, and she was one of the many leaders for the Rebel Alliance. Honestly, she and Antigone were both badasses, and they helped shape the feminist movement that’s being enacted right as we speak.

The ideals set forth by *Star Wars* -- along with a plethora of Greek mythology and *Antigone* -- have molded our society into how it is today. Around the world, millions of people are educated on the matters of the past, and millions of mothers are engraving the lessons outlined in this paper onto the folds of their children’s brains. Now, one may wonder why lessons, masterworks from ages ago are still relevant today. The reason for this is: “such fantasies give voice to our deepest longings, and speak to our hopes about the future of our society and of ourselves” (Gordon, 1978). As humans, we realize that we only have a few milliseconds to leave our mark on the world, so we attempt to verse others and ourselves to be the best that we can be. When times are rough -- or we need inspiration -- we turn to myths, stories to “reveal the exemplary models for all human rites [rights] and all significant human activities “ (Eliade, Trask, 1963). Overall, myths fill craters in our lives; they exemplify our hope in humanity for the alterations, personalities, and morals that are greatly yearned for in this time period. Sometimes, everybody just needs a little bit of faith, which is delivered by the stories of our era and the moments before us.

So, may the force and the gods be with you. Always.

Works Cited

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| **A** | **B** | **C** | **D** |
| I have thoughtful, creative analysis and complete response that addresses the prompt (10pts).        I use thoughtful, well cited and integrated evidence from Antigone and other secondary sources (10pts).      I have thoughtful, creative, and effective organization (10pts).    I have inventive mechanics and no distracting errors (5pts)    I have the appropriate MLA format and requirements: 3-4 pages, double-spaced, etc. (5pts)      I have a perfect works cited page (5pts). | I have solid/appropriate analysis and a complete response that addresses the prompt (8pts)        I use appropriate, clearly cited and integrated evidence from Antigone and another secondary source (8pts).      I have clear and effective organization (8pts).      I have solid mechanics, and some errors, but they aren’t distracting (4pts).      \*\*\*        I have an almost perfect works cited page (4pts). | I have some analysis, but its basic, surface level, underdeveloped and/or my response may be complete but it does not fully address the prompt (6-7pts).    I use some appropriate and clearly cited evidence, but it is limited and/or had some minor errors; you also include Antigone and a secondary source (6-7pts).    I have relatively clear organization, but it is limited, cliché, etc. (7pts).    I have basic mechanics and some distracting errors (3pts).    I have most of the MLA format (3pts).      I have a works cited page, but a couple minor errors (3pts) | I have little analysis and/or it poor and has lots of misinterpretation and/or it is not complete, and/or it does stay focused on the prompt (0-5pts).    I use very little evidence and/or there are errors, poorly connected, etc.; you fail to include any secondary sources (0-5pts).      I have weak, incomplete, and/or confusing organization (0-5pts).    I have poor mechanics and lots of distracting errors (0-2pts).    I do not follow the MLA format and requirements (0-2pts).    I fail to include a works cited page, or there are many errors (0-2pts). |

**SCORE: 45/45pts.**