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Understanding the complex dynamics between the guards and Creon in Sophocles' tragedy *Antigone* provides valuable insight into human psychology, loyalty, and fate. When the guards are called back to speak with Creon, their feelings are multifaceted—ranging from fear and apprehension to a sense of luck and relief. Additionally, the guards' self-reference as "the lucky" reveals much about their perception of their role, their chances of survival, and their place within the tragic unfolding of events. This article explores these emotional responses and the reasons behind their self-designation, offering a comprehensive analysis rooted in the play's themes and character motivations.

The Guards' Feelings About Returning To Speak To Creon

The guards in *Antigone* serve as pivotal characters, acting as intermediaries between the king's authority and the unfolding chaos. Their feelings upon being summoned to report to Creon are complex and layered, shaped by their experiences and the dangerous political environment they inhabit.

Initial Fear and Anxiety

When the guards first learn they must present the captured individual—Antigone—to Creon, their initial reactions are marked by fear. This stems from:

- Awareness of Creon's Severity: Creon's reputation as a strict and vengeful ruler heightens their anxiety.
- Risk of Punishment: They worry about potential punishment if they are perceived as negligent or if they are caught in any wrongdoing.
- Uncertainty of Consequences: The guards are unsure of how Creon will react to their report, especially considering the political tension surrounding Antigone's act of defiance.

This fear underscores their sense of vulnerability and the dangerous nature of their task.

Reluctance and Resentment

Some guards display reluctance and even resentment about their role, feeling caught between loyalty to the state and personal safety. They are aware that:

- Their duties are morally ambiguous: They are tasked with enforcing a law they might privately disagree with.
- They risk their lives: The possibility of punishment or execution looms over them.
- They are pawns in a political game: Their actions serve Creon's authority, not justice or morality.

Despite these feelings, they understand the importance of their role and the potential consequences of failure.

Sense of Duty and Survival Instinct

Amidst their fears, the guards also exhibit a pragmatic sense of duty. Their feelings are intertwined with survival instincts that compel them to:

- Carry out their orders: They recognize the importance of obedience in maintaining their lives.
- Seek to minimize risk: They attempt to report accurately to avoid suspicion or reprisal.
- Hope for mercy: They secretly wish for leniency from Creon, especially if they can present themselves as diligent and loyal.

This mixture of fear and duty creates a tense emotional landscape as they prepare to face Creon.

Why Do The Guards Refer To Themselves As “The Lucky”?

One of the most intriguing aspects of the guards' characterization is their self-reference as “the lucky.” This phrase encapsulates their complex view of their situation and their perception of their own fortune within the tragic narrative.

Analyzing The Guards' Self-Description As “The Lucky”

The guards' self-labeling as “the lucky” is loaded with irony and reflects their nuanced understanding of their circumstances.

Context of The Guards' Self-Description

When the guards first mention their luck, it is in the context of their previous experiences, which include:

- Avoiding death or punishment: Despite the danger, they consider themselves fortunate compared to others who might have been executed or punished more severely.
- Surviving the dangerous task: Carrying out the order to arrest Antigone was perilous, yet they see themselves as lucky to have survived that ordeal.
- Being part of a significant event: They recognize that they are witnesses to a pivotal moment in Thebes' history, which they consider a stroke of luck in their otherwise ordinary lives.

Irony and The Reality of Their "Luck"

While the guards refer to themselves as "the lucky," their statement is deeply ironic. The reasons include:

- They are pawns in Creon's rigid justice: Their survival is more a matter of chance than moral virtue.
- Their "luck" is fragile: They are still at the mercy of Creon's wrath, which can befall them at any moment.
- Their fortunate position is temporary: They may feel lucky now, but the tragic consequences looming over the play suggest their luck could quickly change.

Why Do They Feel "Lucky"?

The guards' feelings of luck are rooted in several factors:

- Avoidance of death: They have managed to evade the death sentence or punishment so far.
- Being alive to witness history: Their survival allows them to see the unfolding drama, which they may see as a rare fortune.
- A sense of camaraderie: Sharing the dangerous task with fellow guards creates a bond, which reinforces their feeling of shared luck.

The Significance Of The Guards' Feelings And Self-Perception

Understanding why the guards feel and refer to themselves as "the lucky" offers deeper insights into their character and the play's themes.

Reflection of Human Nature Under Threat

The guards' feelings highlight a universal human tendency to find comfort in small wins amid chaos and danger. Their self-perception as "lucky" indicates:

- Resilience: Despite the peril, they maintain a sense of hope.
- Coping Mechanism: Labeling themselves "lucky" helps them cope with the stress and moral ambiguity of their actions.
- Acceptance of Fate: They acknowledge that their safety is dependent on luck rather than control.

Commentary on Authority and Power

Their feelings also serve as a commentary on the nature of authority:

- Lack of agency: The guards are compelled to act under Creon's orders, which strips them of moral agency.
- Power dynamics: Their self-description as "lucky" underscores their powerless position, where survival is a matter of chance rather than justice.
- Potential for moral compromise: Their feelings reveal the compromises individuals make when caught between authority and morality.

Implications for Audience and Readers

The guards' feelings and self-reference as "the lucky" resonate with audiences because they:

- Elicit empathy: Recognizing their vulnerability makes audiences sympathize with their plight.
- Highlight tragic irony: Their perceived luck contrasts sharply with the unfolding tragedy, emphasizing the play's themes of fate and human limitation.
- Encourage reflection: Viewers are prompted to consider their own perceptions of luck, justice, and moral responsibility.

Conclusion

The guards' feelings about returning to speak to Creon are a tapestry of fear, duty, resentment, and pragmatic hope. Their self-reference as "the lucky" encapsulates their complex emotional state—an ironic acknowledgment of their fragile survival amid the perilous political landscape of Thebes. This self-perception underscores themes of human vulnerability, the randomness of fate, and the moral dilemmas faced by individuals under authoritarian rule. By analyzing their feelings and self-characterization, we gain a richer

understanding of the tragic universe of Antigone and the profound commentary it offers on power, morality, and human resilience.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the guards' feelings about returning to speak to Creon?

The guards likely feel a mix of apprehension and duty when returning to speak to Creon, as they are aware of the gravity of their statements and the potential consequences of their testimony.

Why does the guard refer to himself as the lucky one?

The guard considers himself lucky because he was able to avoid direct involvement in the crime and is now given the chance to speak openly, potentially sparing himself from harsher punishment.

How do the guards perceive Creon's authority during their return to speak with him?

The guards perceive Creon's authority as commanding but also intimidating, as they are aware of his power to punish or forgive based on their testimony.

What emotions do the guards experience when returning to speak to Creon?

The guards may experience anxiety, fear, and guilt, but also a sense of relief for having the opportunity to tell the truth.

How does the guards' perception of their own actions influence their feelings about speaking to Creon?

Their perception of their actions as protective or necessary influences feelings of guilt or justification, shaping their attitude toward speaking honestly to Creon.

Why might the guards consider themselves fortunate in the context of the story?

They may see themselves as fortunate because their honesty might spare them from harsher punishment and allow them to clear their conscience, despite the risks involved in speaking to Creon.

Additional Resources

The Guards' Feelings About Returning To Speak To Creon: An In-Depth Analysis

Understanding the guards' emotions and motivations as they prepare to speak with Creon in Sophocles' *Antigone* offers profound insights into the play's themes of authority, loyalty, fear, and moral dilemma. Their interaction with Creon is pivotal, revealing not only their personal sentiments but also the broader societal tensions at play. Additionally, their self-reference as "the lucky" introduces an intriguing layer of irony and psychology that warrants detailed exploration. This piece aims to unpack these elements comprehensively.

Contextual Background: The Guards and Creon's Decree

To understand the guards' feelings about their upcoming conversation with Creon, it's essential to grasp the context in which these events unfold.

The Role of the Guards

- The guards are tasked with enforcing King Creon's edict prohibiting the burial of Polynices.
- They serve as agents of the state, embodying the authority of Creon but also embodying the tension between individual morals and state law.
- Their position is precarious—caught between obeying orders and internal doubts about the justice of those orders.

The Situation Leading to Their Confrontation with Creon

- The guards have apprehended Antigone, who defies Creon's edict and buries her brother Polynices.
- Their capture of Antigone is not a matter of personal conviction but rather duty, which complicates their emotional state.
- Creon's unwavering stance against disobedience creates an atmosphere of fear and anxiety among the guards, who are aware of the potential punishment for their actions.

The Guards' Feelings About Returning To Speak To Creon

The guards' emotional states as they prepare to report to Creon reveal a complex blend of fear, guilt, resignation, and even a hint of cautious hope. These feelings are shaped by their

understanding of Creon's temperament, the stakes involved, and their own moral compass.

Fear and Anxiety

- The primary emotion among the guards is fear. They are aware that their actions have challenged royal authority, and Creon's temper can be unpredictable.
- They worry about reprisal or harsh punishment if their report displeases Creon.
- This fear is compounded by their awareness that they have been involved in a morally ambiguous act—burying Polynices secretly—and that admitting this may lead to severe consequences.

Guilt and Moral Ambiguity

- The guards experience guilt for their role in defying the law, even if their actions were driven by necessity or self-preservation.
- They recognize that their duty to the state conflicts with their personal morals, especially considering the moral implications of their actions.
- This internal conflict weighs heavily on them, making the act of reporting to Creon a burdensome task.

Resignation and Hopelessness

- Having carried out their duties under duress, the guards often feel resigned to the consequences.
- They accept their fate as inevitable, which influences their tone and attitude during the confrontation.
- Despite their fears, some may harbor a faint hope that Creon might show leniency or understanding, though they are doubtful.

Strategic Caution

- The guards are aware that their words could influence Creon's perception and subsequent punishment.
- They approach the meeting with caution, choosing their words carefully to avoid incurring wrath.
- This cautiousness results in a guarded demeanor, balancing honesty with self-preservation.

The Guards' Perspectives on Returning to Speak to Creon

Their feelings are not static but evolve as they anticipate and then face Creon.

Anticipation Mixed with Apprehension

- The guards anticipate the confrontation with a mixture of dread and curiosity.
- They wonder how Creon will react to their report, knowing his reputation for severity.
- Their apprehension stems from previous interactions with Creon, where anger or disappointment was evident.

Reluctance and Burden

- They feel a reluctance to be the bearers of bad news, especially when the news involves a moral breach against royal decree.
- The act of informing Creon about Antigone's defiance is a burden—they understand the gravity of their report and its potential fallout.

Hope for Favor or Mercy

- Despite their fears, some guards may harbor a hope that their honesty will earn them some leniency.
- Their hope is often rooted in the belief that Creon might recognize their loyalty or the difficulty of their task.

Resilience and Duty

- Ultimately, their feelings are also shaped by their sense of duty.
- They recognize that, despite fear and guilt, they are compelled to report the truth.
- Their sense of responsibility pushes them forward, even in the face of potential punishment.

Why Do The Guards Refer To Themselves As “The Lucky”?

One of the most striking aspects of the guards' speech is their self-description as “the lucky.” This paradoxical label warrants a deep dive into its psychological, social, and thematic implications.

Historical and Literary Context of “The Lucky”

- The guards refer to themselves as “the lucky” after their encounter with Creon, implying a sense of relief or fortunate circumstance.
- This self-reference is ironic, as their situation is fraught with danger, yet they see a form of luck in surviving or avoiding worse punishment.

Possible Reasons for Their Self-Label

1. Survival and Avoidance of Worse Punishment

- The guards might consider themselves “lucky” because they avoided severe punishment or death.
- Their decision to report rather than conceal their involvement could have been a strategic move, allowing them to preserve their lives.

2. Gaining Favor or Favorable Treatment

- They may view themselves as “lucky” because their honesty might earn them some mercy or at least reduce their guilt.
- Their candidness could be seen as a virtue, aligning with the idea that honesty and loyalty can be rewarded.

3. Psychological Coping Mechanism

- Calling themselves “the lucky” could serve as a psychological defense mechanism.
- It helps them cope with the moral discomfort and fear by framing their situation in a more positive light.

4. Irony and Social Commentary

- The label is deeply ironic, highlighting the disparity between their perception of luck and the precariousness of their position.
- It underscores the play’s themes of fate and the capriciousness of fortune, emphasizing how their survival might be as much luck as judgment.

Deeper Psychological Analysis

- The guards’ self-description as “the lucky” reveals a desire to find meaning or solace amid chaos.
- It suggests a recognition that life is unpredictable and that their fortunate survival is a matter of chance rather than merit.
- Their attitude might also reflect a subtle critique of the arbitrary nature of justice and power—what is “luck” can be a matter of circumstances beyond their control.

Implications for the Play’s Themes

- The phrase encapsulates the tension between human agency and fate.
- It illustrates how individuals navigate the dangerous waters of authority, morality, and survival.
- The guards’ self-labeling as “the lucky” adds a layer of tragic irony, reminding the audience that their fate, like many in the play, is subject to the whims of tyranny and fortune.

Conclusion: The Complex Emotional Landscape of

the Guards

The guards' feelings about returning to speak to Creon are layered and multifaceted, shaped by fear, guilt, hope, and resignation. Their self-identification as "the lucky" adds a poignant touch of irony and resilience, encapsulating their fragile position within the play's moral universe.

Their experience underscores essential themes:

- The conflict between individual morality and state authority.
- The precariousness of human life and the role of chance.
- The psychological strategies individuals employ to cope with danger and moral compromise.
- The tragic irony that even survival can be viewed as "luck" in an unjust world.

In essence, the guards serve as a microcosm of the play's broader exploration of human vulnerability, the arbitrariness of fate, and the complex web of duty, morality, and power. Their feelings and self-perception deepen our understanding of the moral and emotional stakes at play, making their role in *Antigone* both compelling and profoundly human.

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