

Sibling Rivalry and Jealousy

Dean Gladish

Mrs. Hoover

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Dean Gladish

Mrs. Hoover

English 273, Period 6

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Sibling rivalry is an longstanding and venerable concept. It is a concept that has been the focus of the theories of many individuals. Sigmund Freud believed that sibling rivalry influenced the personalities of children, and that children desired the sole attention of their mother. The presence of siblings leads to rivalry for the attention of the mother. The origin of sibling rivalry causes the development of differences in personality of children. Sibling rivalry results primarily from the internalization of jealousy and its intrinsic nature. This concept is easy to see when we look at the sibling relationships in Dede's relationship with her sisters in *In the Time of the Butterflies*, and Antigone's relationship with Ismene in *Antigone*.

In the novel by Alvarez, Dede displays moments of great jealousy which lead to disputes among her and her sisters. Her jealousy of her siblings is most noticeable in her relationship with her sister Minerva. Dede perceives differences in their personalities. She realizes her jealousy of Minerva and her sisters when they invite her to a meeting. Dede writes that some "fury that had nothing to do with this serious business was making her heart beat fast" (Alvarez 178). Dede feels jealousy toward her sisters because she feels inadequate in comparison to them. The jealousy that Dede feels for Minerva causes her to withhold information from her. When Lio gives Dede a letter that he wants to be delivered to Minerva, Dede reads the letter. When she

discovers the invitation, she believes that she “wanted to hold the secret to herself just this one night” (Alvarez 83). The reason that Dede gives for burning the letter is the safety of Minerva. The implied reason is that Dede harbors jealousy of Minerva’s involvement with Lio. Dede knows that Minerva’s relationship with Lio involves practical reasons, and dislikes her sister for this intention. Dede also recalls that she slept “holding her pillow like a man in her arms” (Alvarez 83). This further proves Dede’s jealousy of Minerva’s accomplishments as a martyr for her country. Dede’s experience of jealousy affects their relationship.

Similarly, though separated by centuries from the Mirabals, Sophocles’ Antigone and Ismene display jealous interactions that produce almost the same results in their relationships. Antigone’s conflicts with Ismene after the deaths of their brothers show much animosity between the two characters. Ismene is reluctant to follow Antigone’s plan to bury her dead brother, asking Antigone if she will “flout the interdict” (Sophocles 193). Their differences are shown when Ismene tells Antigone, “challenge Creon to his face?” (Sophocles 193). Ismene believes that they “are women / and as such are not made to fight with men” (Sophocles 193). This shows Ismene’s belief that a woman should not challenge a man. Antigone rejects this belief and defies Creon’s edict. After the burial, Ismene decides to share the credit and the blame for Antigone’s actions, asking her to share her “death and holy homage to the dead” (Sophocles 215). Antigone refuses, because she dislikes Ismene’s passive character. Antigone chooses to not follow Creon’s orders and to bury the dead. Antigone believes that she has done something notable in this aspect, and that her actions will make her superior to her sister.

These two works of literature portray sibling relationships in two different times. They show that jealousy is an innate human emotion. Jealous inevitably leads to sibling rivalry and

competition, from which early childhood personality derives and develops. Jealousy and animosity between siblings is a concept in both *Antigone* and *In the Time of the Butterflies*. The development of jealousy eventually produces results in siblings' relationships. In all sibling rivalries, there is an aspect of jealousy.