Comparing And Contrasting: The Characters Of Brutu Essay, Research Paper

There are many similarities and differences between the characters of Brutus and Cassius in the play “Julius Caesar” by William Shakespeare. It can be concluded by analyzing these differences which of the two characters is more suited to lead the revolt against Caesar, and also which is more suited to lead the ensuing revolution. Upon studying the play, one finds it difficult to find many similarities between the two characters. They are however both closely involved with the same group of conspirators, and also both hold very high positions on Rome s social ladder. It can be inferred that they hold high positions in the eyes of the public because of their level of intelligence and basic skill. They are both good leaders in their own right, but the characteristics of one of these men prevents him from being seen as trustworthy in my eyes. The first and foremost difference between the two is where the entire idea of revolution came from. In Act I, Scene I of the play, Cassius speaks to Brutus. He says, ” So well as by reflection, I, your glass, will modestly discover to yourself that of yourself which you yet know not of. And be not jealous on me, gentle Brutus ” In saying this, Cassius had intimated to Brutus that he (Brutus) is highly skilled and capable perhaps even more skillful and capable than Caesar. He also states that Brutus should not be suspicious of this flattering statement. The idea of revolution is therefore most definitely Cassius objective, which he presents to Brutus in this most flattering fashion. Cassius knows that Brutus has a general trust for the people around him, and he also senses that Brutus thoughts will be plagued by what he has said. One can deduct a certain sense of evil rooted in the actions of Cassius, which should be duly noted. He is a true conspirator, and he cares not who he steps on in accomplishing his goals. Later in the play, he wishes to seal the plans the conspirators have made with an oath (Act II, scene I, line 113). He is also quick to decide that Antony should die along with Caesar (Act II, scene I, lines 155-161). His heart is filled with jealousy and envy for Caesar (Act I, Scene II). He is like a hungry wolf in the way that he thirsts for the blood of Caesar and Caesar s allies. He does not contemplate the consequences of his future actions, as Brutus does. In Act II, scene I, Brutus finds himself awake all night tormented with thoughts about what his future actions may be, and what their consequences will hold. He uses his own personal philosophies and moral standards to help him through the decision making process (Act IV, Scene III, lines 228-237). In my opinion, Cassius was much too quick to decide that Caesar and Antony deserved to die. In this way his ideals appear both Machiavellian and extremely militaristic. In times like these, the gamble of using Machiavellian principles is too great a risk. He would not only be risking his own neck if he could not justify his end with his means, but also the lives and reputations of all the conspirators in his group.

From carefully comparing and contrasting the behaviors of these two individuals, I have found that Brutus would be the better leader for organizing the assassination of Caesar and controlling the following revolution. It is not that Cassius is an unskilled leader, for he does have a brilliant military mind. However, good leader needs to have certain qualities which Cassius is lacking in. A true leader must have some established moral standards, and Cassius has none. Brutus has nobility and leadership in his blood (Act I, Scene II, lines 169-171), while Cassius has none. Brutus employs the use of valid philosophy and reason, while Cassius does not. Leaders like Cassius have shown throughout history to be apt to failure. Two prime examples are Napoleon and Hitler. When a leader who follows the ideals of Cassius fails, as they often do, chaos is the final result. In a time when governmental turbulence is already evident, a truly stable leader is needed and Cassius is not nearly as capable of filling the position as Brutus is.