**EMC CPD Online: Classical Texts and Cultural Conversations – Antigone Re-imagined**

**Tuesday 19th July, 2022**

**Barbara Bleiman**

|  |
| --- |
| **Chat transcript** |
| **Slide 8: Introducing Antigone****Jot down any words that jump out at you while watching the OU cartoon of Antigone** |
| Joan Foley: | proud; craves order |
| Phil Coales: | 'chaos' and 'order' |
| Joan Foley: | disobey |
| Ant Lowey: | law |
| David Robinson: | traitor / loyalty |
| Joan Foley: | humans gods |
| Phil Coales: | eternal peace seems importance as does disobedience/ideas of obeying |
| Ant Lowey: | mercy |
| Myfi Edwards: | anger, chaos, gods, strong |
| Hannah Porteous: | chaos |
| Joan Foley: | too late |
| Hannah Porteous: | tragic |
| Phil Coales: | a lot of death and killing |
| Anna Broomfield: | State vs family |
| Anna Broomfield: | walled vs spared |
| Hannah Porteous: | die / death |
| karapeters: | Chaos, strong-willed, tragic, killed, proud, killed, battling, craves order, traitor, disobedience means death, outraged, eternal peace, disobey, arrested, disdain, human law can’t supplant the will of the gods, state comes before family, condemns niece to death, begs, show mercy, walled up and left to die, spared, blind prophet, free, troubles, relents, hanged, grief-stricken, kills, takes own life, loss, errors, grief |
| Joan Foley: | terrible price |
| Anna Broomfield: | Gods/human law |
| Penny Roche: | Chaos, Antigone, Tragic, Creon craves order, carrion, disobedience means death, disdain, human law vs will of the gods, Mercy, omens, grief, terrible price. |
| Myfi Edwards: | alone, grief, killed himself, |
| Katie Nowicki: | chaos, traitor, state before family, grief |
| Nadia Daubney: | chaos, crown, craves order, traitor, eternal peace, state vs family, disobey, disdain, condemns, omens, troubles, kills, grief |
| **Slide 8: This is a story about…** |
| Katie Nowicki: | This is a story about standing up to those in power for things you believe in. |
| Hannah Porteous: | It's a story about chaos vs order |
| Penny Roche: | It’s about speaking truth to power |
| Phil Coales: | This is a story about the tension between ruling in a way that ensures order, and treating others in an honourable and ethical way |
| Joan Foley: | ...right and wrong, duty and power, |
| David Robinson: | This is a story about the conflict between order and chaos. |
| Anna Broomfield: | This is a story about one pride and the subsequent cost of human life. |
| Ant Lowey: | This is story about taking a stand when you feel strongly about something even if it comes at a considerable personal cost. |
| Myfi Edwards: | this is a story about dying alone, miscommunication and broken families |
| Penny Roche: | It’s about the consequences of our actions. |
| Andrew McCallum: | It's about an unjust ruler and a doomed attempt to confront his injustice |
| karapeters: | It’s a spiralling tragedy which is preventable if Creon had silenced his vanity and listened to those who dared to warn him of disaster. |
| Nadia Daubney: | It's about a leader who believes that law is basis for justice, but one woman believes that there are unjust laws that need to be challenged. |
| **Slide 12 (summarising slides 9-11): Which way of seeing it appeals to you most/is most interesting to you? Why?** |
| Katie Nowicki: | I like C - think it's very true - but A just feels the strongest for me, because of the consequences of her death having such an impact on the wider society |
| Andrew McCallum: | Heart says A - because it allows me to root for Antigone during the play; head says C - because I suspect that's what a close reading would lead me to conclude |
| Anna Broomfield: | I’d go for C - I’m tempted to play devil’s advocate and say the first two statements highlight the third. Perhaps these varying versions of the story work best side by side as opposed separately. |
| Penny Roche: | A - perhaps a traditional reading, but it seems to me to be supported by the subsequent events - ignoring the burial rights leads to the destruction of an entire family however I can see how the other readings can be supported. |
| Phil Coales: | I feel most aligned with C. The first 2 options seem to ignore Creon's journey and the relevance of characters like Ismene and Haemon in highlighting particular personal dilemmas |
| Hannah Porteous: | I like C - life is complicated. Good literature reflects this back at us |
| Ant Lowey: | I think it’s A for me. It seems to me that the key speeches encourage us to admire her bravery. |
| David Robinson: | I've just moved back from Hong Kong where I lived during the recent protests and clampdown, so there's lots of resonance here. Most of the protesters would clearly align with the A interpretation, the government with the B interpretation while I’m a C who'd like to be an A. |
| Joan Foley: | C because I'm 61 but if I were 14 I might say A! |
| Myfi Edwards: | B- i think she puts huge amount at risk. Doesn’t mean I don’t respect her doing that and don’t like ‘good society’ but perhaps ‘society ‘ as it is in the story... |
| Myfi Edwards: | I feel bad though! |
| karapeters: | C- I think the playwright wants his audience to be contemplative and reflective - it’s a clash that feels as if it belongs as much to myth as it does to a hero’s journey film with a young hero facing off against a supervillain |
| Hannah Porteous: | Yes - being 14 would probably mean you'd go with A |
| Penny Roche: | I wonder if it is Creon who puts everything at risk - Antigone is responding to Creon’s own act of disobedience (towards the gods). |
| Myfi Edwards: | yes true- but perhaps they both do? |
| Myfi Edwards: | and the young men all suffer…it’s very hard! |
| Penny Roche: | Yes! and of course there is historic baggage too! |
| Myfi Edwards: | but also she is fairly conformist when you think about it- wanting traditional burial rights? |
| Penny Roche: | Myfi, I wonder about this - might she be seen as the defender of the gods….? |
| **Slide 14: What might students have learned so far?** |
| Hannah Porteous: | That their interpretations may be different to others but are valid |
| Ant Lowey: | Classical texts like ‘Antigone' remain very relevant today! |
| Penny Roche: | About diverse readings and how to support your ideas, about historically different interpretations - and yes the relevance of the play for today. |
| Anna Broomfield: | considering/exploring their own position in relation to the play’s issues. |
| Andrew McCallum: | People read texts differently; Antigone is a really violent and far-fetched play |
| Myfi Edwards: | A little about themselves during that previous task- perhaps that they’re conflicted about her actions |
| Joan Foley: | It's complicated - reading is active and problematic. Need to drill down to see why I think what I think. Might not agree with you so what do I do next? |
| Phil Coales: | Students will have learned the essential elements of the play's plot. They will have thought about different perspectives and how they form when you focus on different characters |
| Ant Lowey: | A little about context / the gods etc / Greek society etc. |
| **Slide 15: Why might *Antigone* have made so many writers, in so many different times and places, want to adapt it?**1. It is about people resisting oppression by tyrants and dictators.
2. It is a powerful drama, involving family conflict, love and death.
3. It has a very strong female character as the protagonist.
4. It has religious and philosophical ideas about death, burial and the afterlife.
5. It is a tragedy, where things end badly, and hearing about others’ suffering can help you think about and understand your own.
6. The conflicts aren’t clear cut and obvious – they are complicated. The characters all have a fair point to argue. That makes it interesting.
7. It’s not just about one place and one time. It’s a myth that can be made relevant to other places and times.
 |
| Anna Broomfield: | 7 |
| karapeters: | 3 + 7 |
| Joan Foley: | 7 |
| Anna Broomfield: | 7 + 2 |
| Andrew McCallum: | 1+3 |
| Penny Roche: | 2, 7 |
| Phil Coales: | I think 3 recently and 2 possibly more lastingly |
| Ant Lowey: | 2 & 7 |
| David Robinson: | 3 + 5 are most interesting to me. |
| Myfi Edwards: | 1,3,7 |
| Nadia Daubney: | 1, 3 |
| Katie Nowicki: | 2 & 7 |
| Hannah Porteous: | 7 - teaches universality of a text |
| Myfi Edwards: | but I like 3,46 |
| **Slide 20/Handout 3: The Facility – reading the opening*** Choose one phrase or line that you especially like or think is important and say why.
 |
| karapeters: | I love how poetic the language is, how the Chorus speaks in lists of powerful words rather than full sentences that spell out the plot. My favorite speech of Antigone’s is: Creon will bury the truth along with her body. Our questions will forever be words rattling around our cells: rubbed smooth like seaglass until there are no sharp edges left to lash out with. |
| Penny Roche: | She drew a picture of my baby girl to give me on my birthday.- I suddenly realised that Ismene had more to lose than Antigone. It makes me see Antigone’s protest as perhaps reckless because of Ismene’s reality. |
| Andrew McCallum: | How cruel to ask a blind crow what he can see. … It's such a weird line. It could only occur in literature! It also alerts me to the particular role that the crow might develop |
| Katie Nowicki: | No. But. A. Girl. Did. Die. |
| Anna Broomfield: | Chorus sections were thought-provoking. I loved: Polynice, disposable, forgettable, flotsam, jetsam, lagan, derelict, arrived in a ship, barely a boat, hardly afloat, a dinghy, alone, already sinking. It could be interesting to see if any of these words linked with those listen from the video task? |
| Myfi Edwards: | darkling I listen- I think it’s an interesting intertextual reference, but also I think it sounds foreboding in the context, she seems to say it from beyond the grave and I like that, a little sinister |
| Katie Nowicki: | I love that part too Myfi |
| Ant Lowey: | ‘…rubbed smooth like seaglass until there are no sharp edges left to lash out with’ |
| Joan Foley: | CROW No. But. A. Girl. Did. Die. |
| Phil Coales: | ISMENE Dignity is speaking the truth about who she was: |
|  | she won at Chess with her back turned |
|  | tied chewy purple snakes into knots |
|  | with her tongue |
|  | shared her shower gel with anyone |
|  | and everyone |
|  | ^ feel like appropriately admirable traits for ks3 learners! |
| Hannah Porteous: | Flotsam/Jetsam |
| David Robinson: | “How cruel to ask a blind crow what he can see” - I presume the crow is a reinterpretation of Tiresias who I always think is such an interesting characters - the blind person who sees what other's can't. It also reminds me of Ted Hughes’ Crow. |
| Joan Foley: | CROW No. But. A. Girl. Did. Die. Impactful. Stark. Picture on the page. |
| Myfi Edwards: | yes andI also think the Crow might appeal to GoT fans- Bran the 3 eyed crow etc. |
| Anna Broomfield: | See if they link with Antigone words listed from the video task? |
| Joan Foley: | Ali Smith's crow? |
| Anna Broomfield: | Brilliant idea, Joan. |
| Nadia Daubney: | I can never understand why you  |
|  | humans spend so much of your time |
|  | in needless strife - TIME is scarce resource, and if it’s wasted, it cannot be recovered later. The importance of time |
| Myfi Edwards: | this reminds me, and adds ideas to the way we approached prometheus before Frankenstein at GCSE |
|  |  |
| **Slide 21: The Chorus – Student Activities** |
| karapeters: | I like how they echo each other and also speak in unison to emphasize certain words. |
| **Slide 27: ‘The Dragon and the Girl’ – Valerie Bloom*** Why might the poet have used three sections?
 |
| Katie Nowicki: | to offer different perspectives |
| Anna Broomfield: | Like acts in a play? |
| Andrew McCallum: | From the perspective of different characters? Creon, Antigone and Polynices? |
| Anna Broomfield: | Voices = Omniscient. |