

Antigone Role Play

I decided to study Tessa and Emily's performance of Antigone and Ismene, from line 46 to line 63. Tessa was playing 'Antigone' and Emily played 'Ismene'.

They gave a very strong first performance, and clearly defined their characters by varying their vocals.

Emily managed to turn 'Ismene' into a very patronising, irritating girl. This showed 'Ismene's' role as the older sister who seemed to look down on her younger sister, 'Antigone' very clearly. I think this worked well because it also showed how afraid and pathetic 'Ismene' was. You could tell from the quavering tone of Emily's voice that she defiantly you her status in life, that being below all the men as a woman. Emily also showed how feeble 'Ismene' was by staying sat down on her seat for the entire performance. By doing this, it gave the audience/forum the idea that 'Ismene' was very comfortable staying out of the way and not even daring to get up and confront 'Antigone' face to face. By sitting down it meant that 'Ismene' was always lower than 'Antigone' which showed 'Antigone' as being the stronger of the two straight away.

Tessa played 'Antigone' as an extremely powerful, determined character. Her facial features were very strong, and along with her voice, at times she appeared to be extremely angry at 'Ismene'. For example, on line 53 she says, "-no, even if you changed and wanted to do it-you would no longer be welcome." That was a particularly strong sentence and Tessa showed great power behind it by standing very planted into the ground and tensed up. Tessa showed 'Antigone' as angry here because she could not believe that her sister, 'Ismene' would not help her to bury their dead brother. As 'Antigone' was a very strong person she probably got angry instead of showing how upset she was with 'Ismene'. Another way that Tessa showed 'Antigone's' feelings was by determinedly striding about the stage.

After watching the performance, the forum made some suggestions. They said that as Emily only had a few lines to say, she should make more of them. For example, they wanted her to emphasize the word 'have' in the sentence, "I have to obey those in power". By doing this the forum thought that it would show even more clearly how helpless 'Ismene' was. The forum liked the way Tessa strode about but thought that certain parts could be better placed as sometimes Tessa ended up blocking Emily from view or turning her back to the audience while speaking. One of the forum got up and showed Tessa how she thought Tessa should stand at certain places, from an audience's point of view. On the 27th line, when 'Antigone' says the line, "my kin" the forum thought that it would be a good idea to casually turn her head slightly to the side to show that she was also talking about her sister. However, I would have to be done carefully so that Tessa did not end up talking downstage to Emily.

Once all the ideas had been suggested, Tessa and Emily performed their section of the play for the final time. Emily really drew in our attention at the beginning of the play by emphasizing the words much more to sound even more pathetic. For example the line, "And so I **beg** forgiveness of those below, I am **compelled**: I **have** to obey those in power." Emily emphasized the words in bold very clearly which sounded really good because all of those words showed how much of a low status 'Ismene' thought she had in life. This greatly contrasted with Tessa's determination and anger. All of Tessa's staging had improved so that she did not block Emily or have her back to the audience. This made her speech from lines 53-63 so much better because we, the forum, were able to really enjoy her facial expressions and what she was saying. Also, by adding little extra movements, such as turning the head back to acknowledge 'Ismene' gave the sisters have much more of a connection with each other.

Overall, I felt that it was a much more enjoyable performance and the little details that the forum had suggested really contributed to this.