ENG10CP *Antigone* discussion questions

Novak

Prologue (lines 1-87)

1. What edict has Creon issued?

2. Compare Ismene’s and Antigone’s reactions to this edict.

3. Describe Antigone’s state of mind.

4. What noble qualities does Antigone display?

5. What faults does she reveal?

6. Describe Ismene’s character.

7. Is Antigone justified in her contempt of her sister? Why or why not?

8. What is the basic conflict in the play?

Parados (lines 88-128)

1. What does the Chorus describe?

2. On what basis does Creon claim the throne?

Scene 1 (lines 129-278)

1. How does Creon describe his philosophy of government to the Chorus?

2. How does Creon justify his refusal to grant Polynices a proper burial?

3. Assess Creon’s intentions: positive or negative?

4. How does the Chorus receive Creon’s edict?

5. What functions does the Chorus serve in this scene?

6. What does the Guard report to Creon?

7. What character flaws does Creon reveal in this scene?

Ode 1 (lines 279-318)

1. According to the Chorus, what is the limitation of all humans?

2. What subtle foreboding of tragedy does the Chorus provide in lines 307-310?

Scene 2 (lines 319-497)

1. What does the Guard report to Creon?

2. What is Antigone’s attitude throughout the confrontation?

3. Is there justification for her attitude? Why or why not?

4. Describe Creon’s attitude during this scene.

5. How does Antigone provoke him?

6. In your opinion, who appears to be in the right--Antigone or Creon?

Ode 2 (lines 498-532)

1. What does the Chorus reveal about Greek values and beliefs of the time?

2. What indication of forthcoming trouble for Creon does the Chorus provide?

Scene 3 (lines 533-674)

1. According to Creon, what qualities should a good son possess?

2. What is Haemon’s argument in defense of Antigone? How does Creon react to his son’s advice?

3. What opposing political ideals are Creon and Haemon upholding in their quarrel?

4. Whose arguments are more effective? Why?

5. In what two ways might Haemon’s threat be interpreted?

6. How does Creon interpret Haemon’s threat?

7. After Haemon exits, the Chorus voices the fear that he may do something rash. How does Creon react?

8. What punishment does Creon decide to impose upon Antigone?

9. What is to become of Ismene?

Ode 3 (lines 675-695)

1. How does the Chorus describe love?

2. How does the Chorus view Antigone’s impending death?

Scene 4 (lines 696-790)

1. Whom does the Chorus blame for Antigone’s impending death?

2. How has Antigone changed? In what way is she still the same?

3. What is Creon’s attitude toward Antigone’s impending death?

4. What does Antigone wish for her enemies?

Ode 4 (lines 791-814)

1. What prominent Greek belief does the Chorus emphasize in Ode 4?

Scene 5 (815-937)

1. How has the prophet determined that the gods are unhappy with Creon?

2. What does Creon accuse Teiresias of having done?

3. On what basis does the Chorus advise Creon to free Antigone and bury her brother?

4. What does Creon learn by the end of the scene?

Ode 5 (lines 938-967)

1. What is the tone of the Chorus’s last speech? Why?

Exodos (lines 968-1134)

1. Why does Creon bury Polynices before releasing Antigone?

2. Why does Haemon kill himself?

3. When does Creon finally accept full responsibility for the deaths in his family?

4. What are Creon’s tragic flaws?

5. In your opinion, who is the tragic figure is this play--Antigone or Creon? Why? Who would a Greek audience consider to be the tragic figure? Why?

6. What parting advice does the Chorus give the audience?