

Carson's Antigone Revamped

EMMET – THE ENGLISH DEPT. THEATRE GROUP

In the spring semester, Emmet continued to work with Anne Carson's *Antigone* (2012). There were a lot of new faces at the theatre workshop, which began in February 2015. The workshop culminated in another three productions of *Antigone* in May. The workshop was aimed at delving even deeper into Carson's now-familiar text. Our objective was to discover new things about the play, the characters, and new modes of performance. We were not disappointed; the text itself was rich and it facilitated this introspective reinterpretation.



There were significant changes in the cast from our previous production (except for the actors playing Antigone, Ismene, and the Chorus). New players were welcomed and were integrated into the production. Moreover, the spring production transformed the performance space from a traditional, proscenium setting, where the audience faces one side of the stage directly, to a traverse stage, where the audience sits on two sides of the stage. The aim was to create an intimate atmosphere, where the audience themselves became a part of the acting space. It also enhanced one of the signature elements of

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Emmet's *Antigonick*: the square, created by a lighting effect, which was placed at the centre of the stage. The conflicts of the play and Antigone's monologues take place within the square. The square represented Antigone's burial chamber as well as the limits of man-made power. The light from above represented divine justice. Hence, the traverse stage setting created the effect of being inside the tomb of Antigone, the audience witnessing her death and the downfall of Kreon.



Furthermore, the bi-frontal acting space posed a challenge to the actors. One of the unwritten "rules" of acting is never turn your back to the audience. Actors hear this so often in their lives that it becomes internalised. In this stage setting, however, breaking the rule was inevitable. Thus, the actors had to "reprogram" themselves to a certain extent. Additionally, in favour of intricate lighting, the production did not use any props.



Lighting, thus, played an amplified role in the production.

In May, Emmet took part in the Festival d'Ateliers-Théâtre 2015. For the first time in the history of Emmet, we were able to perform at the Théâtre La Comédie. We were warmly welcomed by the staff and crew along with the organisers of the festival. After our performance at La Comédie, Emmet performed the final two productions of *Antigonick* at UniMail (Salle de Theatre). At UniMail, *Antigonick* was finally "laid to rest."

The English Theatre workshop will kick off again on 2 October 2015. Next semester, we will be working with Sarah Ruhl's dark comedy *Dead Man's Cell Phone* (2007). Hope to see you there.

Students, alumni, and outside participants who would like to join Emmet can register for the workshop at: <http://www.a-c.ch/>.

For more details, please go to:
<http://emmet.ch/> or contact marlon.ariyasinghe@gmail.com.

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