

# Reception Studies: The Cultural Mobility of Classics

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*Abstract: In spite of connotations of classics and the classical as an established tradition based around a stable canon, Greek and Roman classical antiquity has never been a fixed object of study. It has changed as our knowledge of ancient Greece and Rome has grown and shifted, and as a function of history, intellectual movements, and taste. Classicists have turned to classical reception studies in an attempt to chart some of the different encounters that various historical audiences have had with Greek and Roman classics, and this wave of research poses interdisciplinary questions about the relation of Greek and Roman classics to world literatures and cultures. The emphasis on classical reception studies offers fresh ways of thinking about the cultural mobility of the classics without appealing to discredited, old-fashioned notions of “timeless importance” or “universal value.” This debate is explored here via a Malawian reception of Sophocles’s Antigone.*

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By its very name, the term *classics* proclaims that a select body of works from antiquity is perpetually new. Here I am thinking less of Ezra Pound’s dictum in *ABC of Reading* that “literature is news that STAYS new,” and instead of a remark made by Plutarch, a polymath from Boeotia in central Greece and a subject of the Roman empire.<sup>1</sup> In his *Life of Pericles*, written early in the second century CE, Plutarch writes admiringly of the architecture of the buildings on the Athenian Acropolis, built in the third quarter of the fifth century BCE. For Plutarch, the striking quality of these buildings was that, at the time of construction, they were instantly antique, and yet in Plutarch’s day (over five hundred years later) they remained fresh and new.

Each one of them, in its beauty, was even then and at once antique [*archaios*]; but in the freshness of its vigour it is, even to the present day, recent [*prosphtos*] and newly wrought [*neourgos*]. Such is the bloom of per-

petual newness [*kainotēs*], as it were, upon these works of his, which makes them ever to look untouched by time, as though the unfaltering breath of an ageless spirit had been infused into them.<sup>2</sup>

(Plutarch *Life of Pericles* 13.3,  
trans. Bernadotte Perrin)

All of us in the academy would like to claim the bloom of perpetual newness for our disciplines. In the case of classics, this old-newness is written into our self-naming, with *classics* and *the classical* shorthand for a complex process of classicization that has gone into defining the transcultural and transhistorical value of works from Greek and Roman antiquity.

As a heavily freighted value system, classics is not always an ideal vehicle for ensuring the continued study of the cultures of ancient Greece and Rome. Instead, because of the antiquity of the works that it signifies, its perceived entwinement with formations such as “Western Civilization,” “Europe,” or “Eurochronology,” and because of the elitism written into its very nomenclature, from the outside, classics strikes many across the globe as at best moribund and at worst a bastion of European cultural chauvinism. What is classical is what is judged first-rate, and this judgment presupposes a single scale of value, since works can only be ranked in terms of excellence and lasting value if they are all measured on the same scale. And if the classics of ancient Greece and Rome have a prior monopoly on what is classical, then classics appears to impose its canon on all other areas of study and artistic endeavour. The fact that *canon* is a Greek noun in origin (*kanōn*: a rod, rule, standard), attested in ancient Greek literary criticism to refer to authors who are exemplary and judged worthy of study and preservation, does not help the case for classics in the academy, where the implicit universalism of classics falls foul of a

distrust in universals in contemporary liberal thought.

For much of the research and teaching transacted within departments of classics, the ideological overtones of classics and the classical are an extraneous concern; classicists know what they study (the languages, history, literature, art, archaeology, and thought – including philosophy and science – of ancient Greece, Rome, and contiguous civilizations in the ancient Mediterranean) and are not interested in claiming universal relevance or reach for their subject. On the contrary, the palaeographical, linguistic, philological, historical, and archaeological skills that are at the core of research and pedagogy in classics are deeply historicizing and pull against a universalizing impulse. But academic disciplines do not always get to define themselves and are subject to something of a time-lag as far as external perceptions go. In recent years, classicists have responded by tackling any image problems head-on: the 2009 creation in the United Kingdom of a flourishing charity entitled “Classics for All” counters the assumption that classics is the preserve of a narrow elite; meanwhile, the erstwhile American Philological Association, founded in 1869, changed its name in 2014 to the more accessible “Society for Classical Studies.”<sup>3</sup>

These outreach efforts have been accompanied by the growth of classical reception studies. Classicists have long studied the afterlives of Greek and Roman authors, as have scholars in other disciplines, but the emergence of a concerted program studying the contextualized reception of classics and the history of classical scholarship marks a shift away from a fixed and hierarchical classical tradition, which emphasized a single lineage traced through European culture to the present day, to an unruly, uncanonical, and unpredictable series of encounters and responses to Greek

and Roman classics in diverse cultures and contexts. This development has in turn sparked new debates, revolving around the question of how to study the far-reaching cultural mobility of Greek and Roman classics, which increasingly circulate in the works of writers who do not identify themselves with “the classical tradition,” “the West,” “European civilization,” or “classical humanism” without appealing to discredited universals.<sup>4</sup>

Latterly I have begun to use the compound adjective *omni-local*, modeled on Albert Murray’s term *omni-American*, to discuss the translatability, adaptability, and relationality of classics in different contemporary cultures. As coined by Murray, the term *omni-American* referred to the “irrevocably composite” nature of modern American culture.<sup>5</sup> In proposing the category of *omni-local* for Greek and Roman classical texts that circulate widely in different historical and cultural contexts, I want to evoke the idea that these “classics” are cultural composites that result from successive readers and audiences encountering and making sense of these works.

But the concept of *omni-local* classics has other useful resonances. The *omni-local* substitutes a horizontal, two-way relationship in place of a vertical, hierarchical tradition. In the context of classical reception studies, the focus on the local dimensions of classical adaptation applies equally to the classical “source” text, and reminds us that in their original contexts the classics were themselves “local,” insofar as they worked with, read, and received existing myths and other works. This is particularly clear in the case of “classical” ancient Greek epics such as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, which grew out of the oral circulation of epic poems, and for extant Greek tragedies, which rework and supplement existing versions of myths and sometimes prior dramatic works that are based on these myths. So Sophocles’s interpretation and

version of *Antigone* is local in the sense that it adapted a body of myth, which had both local and trans-local dimensions, for an Athenian audience, at an Athenian dramatic festival in a specific historical, cultural, political, and religious context.<sup>6</sup> This local drama then went on to have a very rich supra-local life in re-performance.

Critics of cosmopolitanism have objected that championing cosmopolitanism in literature and art downgrades the regional and the local, instead elevating works with a Western-oriented and “cosmopolitan” literary reach that secures them transnational mobility. Along similar lines, canonical literature and local literature are frequently treated as mutually exclusive. Commenting on the experience of teaching Sophocles’s *Antigone* alongside the Argentinean playwright Griselda Gambaro’s *Antígona furiosa* (1985 – 1986) in a world literature class, Jane Newman has remarked that her students were struck by the gulf between critical responses to the two works: “canonical works are often read, well, canonically, as articulating universals, as opposed to how their successors are often read and perhaps also taught – that is, as only local works.”<sup>7</sup> Approaching a work like Sophocles’s *Antigone* as an *omni-local* classic obviates the traditional hierarchy between the canonical and the local by emphasizing the local embedded in the classical.

One possible objection to this concept is that a version of cosmopolitanism or universalism is being reintroduced through the prefix *omni*, from the Latin adjective *omnis* (all, every). After all, isn’t labeling something “local to all” (one way of construing *omni-local*) the same as labeling it universal, or timeless (to shift from a spatial to a temporal metaphor)? Or, responding to a recent challenge to an overly fluid and fluent model of world literature, doesn’t the *omni-local* rest on naive assumptions about cultural equivalence and

translatability and ignore the stubborn untranslatability of many classic works?<sup>8</sup> Here the focus on reception is crucial, since the receiving community makes or shapes the meaning of the classic being received. The omni-local model recognizes the fact that while a classic might circulate virtually among very different interpretative communities, as soon as it gets taken up and adapted it becomes specific and local, opening an inevitable translation gap between the adapted text and the adaptation. The idea that a text is inert without readers to give it meaning is a given in reception studies, specifically the reader-response theory exemplified by the work of Wolfgang Iser, who argued that “the convergence of text and reader brings the literary work into existence.”<sup>9</sup> To label a classic omni-local is to acknowledge its local, historical origins, some of which are untranslatable, while simultaneously crediting it with a strong degree of cross-cultural adaptability that is virtual and indeterminate – to be determined by the receiving reader and audiences.

One of the explanations for the cultural mobility and versatility of Greek and Roman classics is the fact that, although they have been grafted into multiple national literatures in the modern world to serve arguments surrounding national sovereignty, empire, and anti-colonial resistance, neither ancient Greek nor Roman literature was or is a national literature.<sup>10</sup> This is true both in the weak sense that the various political communities encompassed by ancient Greece and Rome predated the emergence of the modern nation-state, and in the stronger sense that the literature that survives from Greek and Roman antiquity has its own local affinities, both under the heterogeneous Greek city-states and contiguous centers of Greek culture dotted around the ancient Mediterranean, and also under the Roman empire with educated Roman citizens writing in Latin, Greek,

and other languages from different geographical locations (including Rome, Gaul, Spain, Syria, Egypt, Tunisia), and often traveling between these locations and switching between cultures.<sup>11</sup>

Sophocles’s *Antigone* is one of the most mobile classics to have survived from ancient Greece, and it has garnered an immensely rich reception history that spans the disciplines of classics, theater and performance studies, comparative literature, modern languages, and political thought.<sup>12</sup> According to Erin Mee and Helene Foley, editors of a recent collection of essays analyzing the presence of *Antigone* in contemporary global theater, *Antigone* is the most widely performed play in the world *tout court*.<sup>13</sup> The essays in their collection discuss performances and adaptations from Argentina, Burkina Faso, Canada, Egypt, Finland, France, the Republic of Georgia, Greece, Haiti, Ireland, India (specifically Manipur), Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Poland, Turkey, and the United States.

As a case study, I am going to focus on a single, short response to Sophocles’s *Antigone* by the Malawian academic, poet, and writer Jack Mapanje, comparing it to the best-known response to *Antigone* from the continent of Africa: the play *The Island* (1973) by Athol Fugard, John Kani, and Winston Ntshona.<sup>14</sup> I have chosen Mapanje’s poem because it illustrates the vital, recalcitrant energy of Sophocles’s play and its traction within a particular, local context where it was mobilized as a counter-text to a brutal hegemonic regime that had claimed Greek and Roman classics for rather different ends.

Some brief context first: Jack Mapanje was head of the English department at Chancellor College (the University of Malawi) when he was arrested and imprisoned without charge in September 1987, apparently because he had been critical in his poetry of the country’s autocratic “Life

President,” Ngwazi Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda (1898 – 1997).<sup>15</sup> He was kept in Miku-yu prison for a total of three years, seven months, and sixteen days. One of the many poems that Mapanje composed in prison addresses Banda in the guise of Creon, tyrant of Thebes, as depicted in Sophocles’s play. Specifically, Mapanje has chosen the point at which Creon discovers the suicide of his son Haemon, a suicide precipitated by Creon’s effective murder of Antigone, who had been betrothed to marry Haemon. In order to avoid the pollution that might result from killing Antigone, Creon had her walled up in a cave, with food provided, in a form of live burial (Sophocles *Antigone* 773 – 780). As it is, Antigone commits suicide by hanging.

“No, Creon, There’s No Virtue in Howling”  
*‘It is no glory to kill and kill again.’*

Tiresias, *Antigone*

No, Creon, you overstate your image to your  
People. No, there’s no virtue in howling so.  
How can you hope to repair Haemon, your  
Own blood, our only hope for the throne,  
By reproaching his body mangled by your  
Decree and put to rest without the requiem  
Of our master drums? What tangential  
sentries

Advise you to bemoan the dead by scoffing  
Them publicly thus? Those accidents your  
Flunkies master-stroked, those tortures &  
Exiles fashioned, and the blood you loved  
To hear, did we need more lies? Look now,  
Even the village lads toss their coins for old  
Creon’s days. What cowardice, what  
perversity

Grates life-laden minds on our  
death-beds?<sup>16</sup>

In Mapanje’s version of this episode from Sophocles’s play, Haemon represents the “son” of Malawi killed on Banda’s orders, or upon the orders of those in his inner circle. Among the many victims of Banda’s rule, the poem alludes to the mur-

der of the dissident Malawian MP Aaron Gadama, who in May 1983 was assassinated by Banda’s regime along with three other MPs. The four men were clubbed to death and then bundled into a car that was subsequently crashed, to make it look like a road accident.<sup>17</sup> In his memoir, Mapanje writes with dark humor of his own fear that he too might be “accidentalised.”<sup>18</sup> Aaron Gadama was apparently Banda’s cousin, hence the poem’s stress on the hypocrisy of Creon lamenting the death of his own kin, for which he is responsible. The quotation that supplies the epigraph for Mapanje’s poem is a paraphrase of *Antigone*. At lines 1029 – 1030, the prophet Tiresias urges Creon to “Give way to one who is dead and don’t keep goading him now he has perished. What strength is there in re-killing one who is dead?” (ἀλλ’ εἶκε τῷ θανόντι, μηδ’ ὀλωλότα | κέντει. τίς ἀλκή τὸν θανόντ’ ἐπικτανεῖν;). These lines refer to Creon’s dishonouring of the corpse of Polynices, Antigone’s brother and Creon’s own nephew, whose burial he has forbidden on the grounds that Polynices died as a traitor fighting against Thebes. In Mapanje’s epigraph, the motif of double-killing may allude to the fact that the MPs were given a staged, second death, to dissemble their prior assassination. In focusing on the relationship between Creon and Haemon, the poem hints at Banda’s kinship relation to Aaron Gadama, as well as Banda’s autocratic, paternalistic style of government destroying the household of the nation, killing off the “sons” of Malawi.

In the circumstances, there is grim irony in Mapanje’s recourse to Sophocles. In 1981, Banda founded an eponymous secondary school modeled on the British public school system, Kamuzu Academy, at which all students were required to study ancient Greek and Latin, and where he lectured his students that they could not be truly educated or civilized without knowledge of the classics. He was duly ridiculed

by many African intellectuals, most notably Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, for whom such statements were a sign of a thoroughly colonized mind.<sup>19</sup> Detained by the regime of a leader who had aligned himself with the classics, Mapanje offers a counter-reading of the classics in the form of a lesson drawn from Athenian tragedy. Echoing Creon's clash with Antigone over whether the laws of the state should prevail over the unwritten customs that applied to honoring the dead, Banda-as-Creon is depicted overturning the customs of his own people by denying proper burial rites to his victims, as with the four MPs assassinated in 1983.<sup>20</sup> And as is the case in Sophocles's Thebes, where civil war spills into fratricide and, ultimately, domicide, Banda's making enemies of his own people is represented as the murder of his own family and preparation for his downfall.

Mapanje's decision to remonstrate with Banda's tyrannical rule via Sophocles's play was presumably influenced by the adoption of *Antigone* in the political theater of African playwrights. The obvious parallel is *The Island*, a South African adaptation of *Antigone* by Athol Fugard, John Kani, and Winston Ntshona. First staged in Cape Town by the Serpent Players in July 1973 with the title *Die Hodoshe Span (Hodoshe's Work Team)*, the play revolves around a two-man production of Sophocles's *Antigone* that was performed by two ANC (African National Congress) prisoners, Norman Ntshinga and Siphon Mguqulwa, on Robben Island, as part of a prison concert that capped sketches at fifteen minutes. Both men were members of the Serpent Players when they were arrested and they related details of this production to the troupe in their letters from prison; these descriptions inspired *Die Hodoshe Span*, subsequently retitled *The Island* (after Robben Island).

While *The Island* is a play about putting on a production of *Antigone*, rather than a

conventional version or adaptation of *Antigone*, it has its origins in a conventional production of Sophocles's *Antigone* produced by the Serpent Players in 1965, which was based on E. V. Rieu's translation of the play.<sup>21</sup> Siphon Mguqulwa had been due to play the part of Haemon and Norman Ntshinga had been cast in a supporting role, but both men were arrested while the play was in rehearsal. John Kani, the actor who would subsequently play the part of Creon in *Die Hodoshe Span / The Island*, stepped in to the role of Haemon. In *The Island*, the prison production within the play uses classical drama as an alibi for on-going resistance to the nationalist Afrikaner government. The protagonists John and Winston use their prison play about Creon's brutal punishment of Antigone to deliver a message of protest to the regime and to those whom it oppresses from within its most notorious prison. While Antigone's classical credentials get their subversive messages past the prison guards, it is the unruliness and complexity of Sophocles's classic that commended it to the Serpent Players in 1965, and it was this unruliness that commended it to Norman Ntshinga when he was casting around for a play to produce for the prison concert on Robben Island.

The boundary between Sophocles's play and contemporary South Africa, particularly as viewed from the black South African perspective, collapses in the fourth scene of *The Island*, in which John and Winston present and enact "The Trial and Punishment of Antigone." When Creon sentences Antigone, her place of incarceration is the actual prison in Robben Island in which the play is set:

Take her from where she stands, straight to the Island! Then wall her up in a cell for life, with enough food to acquit ourselves of the taint of her blood.<sup>22</sup>

Fugard, Kani, and Ntshona mobilized *Antigone* as an anti-colonial protest play,

while Mapanje's poem – technically a post-colonial poem written by a Malawian poet in an independent African nation – used the figure of Creon in Sophocles's play as an argument against the president's merciless abuses of power. In both cases, Sophocles's *Antigone* offers a supra-local web of reference; it functions both as a source text and a hypertext that links works in different local contexts.

What does any of this have to do with the ways that scholars, students, and the general reader might approach Sophocles's *Antigone* in the twenty-first century? The model of classical reception that I have sketched here, based around the idea of the omni-local, is emphatically a two-way process in which later adaptations also become "local" and available for the interpretation of Sophocles's play. While these readings may be available, it is up to classicists to choose whether and how they avail themselves

of these responses when trying to make sense of Sophocles's play.

In his scholarly edition and commentary of the Greek text of Sophocles's *Antigone*, Mark Griffith distinguishes between the many different approaches to interpreting the play and those that are convincing to "a majority of the 'competent readers' who have weighed the critical alternatives in the light of their own examination of the text."<sup>23</sup> In this scenario, traditional classical scholarship nestles within and is a version of reception studies, where it is carried out by an interpretative community with scholarly expertise in ancient Greek literature, alongside other communities who have read and responded to the text. But there is no barrier between reading and studying Sophocles's *Antigone* as an Athenian, ancient Greek text and an omni-local text; in fact, the latter is vital if we want to be part of the broader conversation about Sophocles's play in the twenty-first century.

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Ezra Pound, *ABC of Reading*, 2nd ed. (London: Faber and Faber, 1951), 29.

<sup>2</sup> For an astute discussion of this passage, see James Porter, "Feeling Classical: Classicism and Ancient Literary Criticism," in *The Classical Traditions of Greece and Rome*, ed. James I. Porter (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006), 301–352 (for discussion of the Plutarch passage, see 329–333).

<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.classicsforall.org.uk>; and <https://classicalstudies.org>.

<sup>4</sup> Lorna Hardwick offers a perceptive commentary on this return to a version of the universal in classical reception studies: "One of the effects of the recent association of classical texts with social critique and liberation movements has been to release them from inevitable association with the classes and monuments that appropriated them in the past. . . . [O]ne less expected consequence of this liberation has been the revival of interest in what used to be dismissed as "universalism," that is explanations of transhistorical (and now also transcultural) force." See Lorna Hardwick, "Against the Democratic Turn: Counter-Texts; Counter-Contexts; Counter-Arguments," *Classics in the Modern World: A Democratic Turn?* ed. Lorna Hardwick and Stephen Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 23.

<sup>5</sup> Albert Murray, *The Omni-Americans: Some Alternatives to the Folklore of White Supremacy* (New York: Outerbridge & Diensfrey, 1970), 22.

<sup>6</sup> Alexander Beecroft proposes a helpful explanatory model for understanding the local and supra-local aspects of ancient Greek epic, lyric, and tragedy. Beecroft proposes the terms *epichoric* (referring to "literature produced within the confines of a local community") and *panchoric* (referring to "literary texts and systems of circulation operating across a range of epichoric communities"), and argues that these two orientations – epichoric and panchoric – often

- interact productively in these archaic and classical Greek genres. See Alexander Beecroft, "World Literature Without a Hyphen: Towards a Typology of Literary Systems," *New Left Review* 54 (November – December 2008): 92 – 93. The term *epichoric* is borrowed from Gregory Nagy, *Pindar's Homer: The Lyric Possession of an Epic Past* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 66 – 67.
- <sup>7</sup> Jane O. Newman, "The Afterlives of the Greeks; or, What Is the Canon of World Literature?" in *Teaching World Literature*, ed. David Damrosch (New York: Modern Language Association, 2009), 131.
- <sup>8</sup> On untranslatability, see the arguments in Emily Apter, *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability* (London: Verso, 2013).
- <sup>9</sup> Wolfgang Iser, "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach," in *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 275.
- <sup>10</sup> For an analysis of some of the ways in which modern, national cultures have appropriated ancient Greece and Rome and in turn been shaped by Greek and Roman ideas, see Susan A. Stephens and Phiroze Vasunia, eds., *Classics in National Cultures* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
- <sup>11</sup> See Tim Whitmarsh, "Thinking Local," and Greg Woolf, "Afterword: The Local and the Global in the Graeco-Roman East," in *Local Knowledge and Microidentities in the Imperial Greek World*, ed. Tim Whitmarsh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 1 – 16 and 180 – 200, respectively.
- <sup>12</sup> Major studies include George Steiner, *Antigones: The Antigone Myth in Western Literature, Art and Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984); S. E. Wilmer and Audrone Zukauskaitė, eds., *Interrogating Antigone in Postmodern Philosophy and Criticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); and Bonnie Honig, *Antigone, Interrupted* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
- <sup>13</sup> Erin Mee and Helene Foley, "Mobilizing Antigone," in *Antigone on the Contemporary World Stage*, ed. Erin Mee and Helene Foley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 1.
- <sup>14</sup> For a discussion of prominent African adaptations of and responses to Sophocles's *Antigone*, see Barbara Goff and Michael Simpson, *Crossroads in the Black Aegean: Oedipus, Antigone, and Drama of the African Diaspora* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
- <sup>15</sup> On May 2, 1988, "Banda" wrote a reply to academics at the University of Edinburgh (his alma mater) who had written asking him to release Jack Mapanje. The letter (probably written by a member of Banda's inner circle) states that Jack Mapanje had been detained because he had been "using the classroom as a forum for subversive politics"; a copy of this letter is reprinted on page 4 of Peter H. Marsden and Geoffrey V. Davis, eds., *Towards a Transcultural Future: Literature and Human Rights in a 'Post'-Colonial World* (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 2004). In the same collection, James Gibbs offers a careful analysis and chronology of the events leading up to Mapanje's arrest; see James Gibbs, "The Back-Seat Critic and the Front-Line Poet: The Case of Jack Mapanje, Scholar, Teacher, Poet, Detainee, Exile," 29 – 50.
- <sup>16</sup> See Jack Mapanje, *From the Chattering Wagtails of Mikuyu Prison* (London: Heinemann, 1993), 12.
- <sup>17</sup> The three other MPs were Dick Matenje, Twaibu Sangala, and David Chiwanga.
- <sup>18</sup> Jack Mapanje, *And Crocodiles are Hungry at Night, a memoir by Jack Mapanje* (Banbury: Ayebia Clarke Publishing, 2011), 19 and 29.
- <sup>19</sup> Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (London: Heinemann, 1986), 19.
- <sup>20</sup> See Mapanje, *From the Chattering Wagtails of Mikuyu Prison*, 205: "When the MPs' mangled bodies were dumped at their homes, the security officers who brought them ordered the families to bury them at gunpoint. The expected traditional or church burial rites for them were not allowed." As Francis Moto explains in his discussion of this poem, the reference to "our master drums" in line 7 is to the drumming customarily performed for the dead in the Che-



wa ceremony of the gule wamkulu (“big dance”); see Francis Moto, *The Context and Language Emily of Jack Mapanje’s Poetry* (Cape Town: Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society, 2008), Greenwood 102.

<sup>21</sup> For the background to all three productions, see Athol Fugard, “Antigone in Africa,” in *Amid Our Troubles: Irish Versions of Greek Tragedy*, ed. Marianne McDonald and J. Michael Walton (London: Methuen, 2002), 128–147.

<sup>22</sup> Athol Fugard, John Kani, and Winston Ntshona, *The Island* (1972) in Athol Fugard, *The Township Plays*, ed. Dennis Walder (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 227.

<sup>23</sup> Sophocles, *Antigone*, ed. Mark Griffith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 25–26.