Sibling Logic; or, Antigone Again

STEFANI ENGELSTEIN

The relationship in its unmixed form is found, however, in that between brother and sister. They are the same blood which has, however, in them reached a state of rest and equilibrium. Therefore they do not desire one another, nor have they given to, or received from, one another this independent being-for-self; on the contrary, they are free individualities in regard to each other.

—Hegel, *Phenomenology* 274

ECKERMANN. *He also appears to have had before his eyes merely the character and mode of action of this heroine [Antigone], as he makes the assertion that family piety appears most pure in woman, and especially in a sister; and that a sister can love only a brother with perfect purity, and without sexual feeling.*

GOETHE. *I should think that the love of sister for sister was still more pure and unsexual. As if we did not know that numerous cases have occurred in which the most sensual inclinations have existed between brother and sister, both knowingly and unknowingly!*

—Goethe 173[1]

I will skip the details of her [Antigone's] dialogue with Ismene.

—Lacan, *Ethics* 265

STEFANI ENGELSTEIN is director of the Life Sciences and Society Program and associate professor of German at the University of Missouri, Columbia. She is the author of *Anxious Anatomy: The Conception of the Human Form in Literary and Naturalist Discourse* (SUNY P, 2008) and a coeditor of *Contemplating Violence: Critical Studies in Modern German Culture* (Rodopi, 2011). This essay is part of a larger book project entitled *Sibling Logic: Incest, Collective Identity, and the Subject*, which explores the sibling relationship as a paradigm for negotiating subjectivity in relation to emerging collective identities in political, racial, linguistic, religious, and psychological discourses in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries.

IN HIS 1984 *ANTIGONES*, GEORGE STEINER NOTES THE "MOMENTOUS" shift at the beginning of the twentieth century in which "Oedipus replaces Antigone" (18), as Freud initiated an era of vertical kinship models that supplanted a more complex mixture of horizontal and vertical affiliations. There can be no doubt that psychoanalysis has continued to embrace vertical lineages at the expense of understanding sibling relations and indeed that this elision has been carried into other branches of critical theory. But in another way Steiner was

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mistaken—*Antigone* and Antigone never lost their popularity, in twentieth-century adaptations Steiner himself documents and in theory, from Heidegger and Lacan to Irigaray and Derrida. If Paul Allen Miller has recently been able to locate the roots of poststructuralism in classical texts including Sophocles's *Antigone*, it is because poststructuralism traces its heritage to Romantic and classicist theory, which was drenched in translations of and commentaries on *Antigone*—by Hölderlin, Hegel, August Whilhelm Schlegel, and Goethe, to name but a few. Judith Butler's *Antigone's Claim* has heralded a new wave of intense engagement with *Antigone* in the new century. The ongoing compulsion to return to *Antigone* derives from the drama's gripping interrogation of subjectivity, desire, and collective political life. However, it is equally motivated by *Antigone*'s resistance to a common element in these otherwise diverse readings—namely, a reductive view that reinforces limits on the conditions of possibility for subjectivity.

Butler discovered in Steiner a provocation to a productive thought experiment: "What would have happened if psychoanalysis had chosen Antigone rather than Oedipus?" (*Antigone's Claim* 57). The question as Butler poses it, however, reenacts the excision that regularly reduces *Antigone* to Antigone.[2] Lacan's laconic "What does one find in *Antigone*? First of all, one finds Antigone" embodies this pervasive trend (*Ethics* 250). Some critics have widened their sights, but only to include the ruler Creon, following the dual logic of Hegel's foundational dialectical reading of the play as the staging of a conflict between masculine and feminine, public sphere and family (*Phänomenologie*; *Grundlinien*). The consequences of these blinders extend beyond questions of literary interpretation, since critics turn to *Antigone* to unveil the roots of the theories of subjectivity that the play challenges. To truly understand the attraction and potential of Sophocles's drama, we must be careful not to erect an Antigone complex but to recognize instead an *Antigone* complex[3]—a complex modeled on the web of relationships in play around Antigone, beginning with her siblings Oedipus (who is both brother and father), Polyneices, Eteocles, and, particularly, Ismene.[4] This investigation will first of all acknowledge the impossibility of locating an *individual* in this text, and not only in the incestuous Labdacid family. The intricate tenor of relatedness, the inability of characters to pluck themselves out of each other's being, confronts us with the complex in this complex. Bracha Ettinger, moving in this direction, has referred to the transsubjectivity that incorporates Antigone and Polyneices, the brother she gives her life to bury ("Transgressing"). Lacan (*Ethics*), Steiner, and Simon Goldhill have all noted the intimate forms of address that connect Antigone and her sister, Ismene, at the play's opening. And we should not forget the startling vision of plural subjectivity inherent in the tragic form of the chorus, in which voices speaking in unison represent the intricately intertwined polis. While the polis differs radically from the modern state, it nonetheless shares some crucial concerns with the budding notion of nationality in the eighteenth century that evolved into our own; *Antigone* scrutinizes the interconnections between subject, family, community, place, the kinship of a population, the definition of the foreign, and the effects of colonialization on identity. The drama thereby intervenes in poststructuralist debates on subjectivity, intersubjectivity, and the political.

It is no coincidence then that leading theorists of the subject in its outward relationality have felt drawn to *Antigone*. In different veins, Lacan and, more recently, Butler have extended the intersubjective operations of the psyche introduced by Hegel's dyadic dialectic of recognition and expanded by Freud. While Lacan opened the subject to a shared, constitutive linguistic sphere, the psychoanalytic model of primary relationality remains figured by interaction with a parental pair that

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functions oppositionally in the imaginary. The psychoanalytic social field, first narrowed to a familial threesome, thus further resolves itself into one and its other. Butler's work attempts to situate the subject more firmly in an intersubjective dynamic by analyzing the interplay between the discursive sociopolitical sphere and inner psychic processes. Her work continues to grapple, however, with the collapse of the intersubjective into an imaginary dualism implicated in an oppositional gender divide. This binary logic forecloses potentials for theorizing differential relationships and collective identities not only in the imaginary but also in the symbolic order. Juliet Mitchell has recently argued that "one of the reasons why theories of group psychology have not advanced further than they have may be to do with the fact that, firstly, siblings have been omitted" (12–13).[5] The sibling as a model, I argue, allows us to move beyond both self-other dualisms and the mother-child dyad as the only grounds for intersubjectivity, and recognizes the subject as instead embedded in a network of *partial others*, whose subjectivities are nonetheless partially, though differentially, shared. Such a model responds to Barbara Stafford's recent plea that in this "age of otherness, of assertive identities," we find a "relational way" that enables a "double avoidance of self-sameness and total estrangement" (10, 86, 10). A logic of differential degrees of likeness provides the foundation for less confrontational formulations of belonging, identity, and agency. As we reexamine paradigmatic (mis)readings of Sophocles's play by Lacan and Hegel and correctives by Butler, Ettinger, and others, we will return repeatedly to *Antigone* as a guide to the potential of sibling logic.

The Elision of the Sibling

Antigone's crime is to transgress the law of her uncle, Creon, who has decreed that the body of her brother Polyneices be left unburied. Antigone thus knowingly forfeits her life and with it her future role of wife and mother.[6] Lacan, in *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, provides a problematic reading of Antigone in the context of the beauty inherent in uncompromising devotion to the law of one's own desire. In Antigone's choice of the dead brother as object of desire, he sees an exposure of the normally screened hole in the real, the void that resists discourse and initiates the metaphoric substitution that structures the symbolic order. Antigone's desire therefore manifests itself as a death drive; her desire is the desire for the pure signifier, the other writ large. Polyneices comes to inhabit this space for Lacan because he remains outside any chain of substitutions; he is irreplaceable. As Antigone herself argues in a passage that has puzzled and disturbed commentators for centuries, it is only for a brother that she would break Creon's law and sacrifice her life and not for a husband or child:

> If my husband were dead, I might have had
> another,
> and child from another man, if I lost the first.
> But when father and mother both were
> hidden in death
> no brother's life would bloom again for me.
>
> πόσις μὲν ἄν μοι κατθανόντος ἄλλος ἦν,
> καὶ παῖς ἀπ' ἄλλου φωτός, εἰ τοῦδ' ἥμπλακον·
> μητρὸς δ' ἐν Ἅιδου καὶ πατρὸς κεκευθότοιν
> οὐκ ἔστ' ἀδελφὸς ὅστις ἄν βλάστοι ποτέ.
> (lines 909–12)[7]

Lacan uses this passage to legitimate a move through a point posited as irreplaceable; where Antigone names *brother*, Lacan reads *mother's desire*. He delves through the brother to the parents: to Oedipus as complex and to Jocasta in her incestuous relationship to her son. In her elevation of the brother, then, Antigone enacts the mother's desire for the son, repeating the "criminal desire" of the mother at "the origin of everything" (*Ethics* 283).

Ettinger takes issue with Lacan at the point of this return to Oedipus, both liter-

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ally and as complex, through Jocasta, rejecting the "folding of the womb into the phallus/castration stratum" ("Transgressing" 193). Ettinger proposes a feminine difference arising "physically, imaginatively and symbolically" from female bodily specificity (195). Outside the symbolic logic of castration but foundational for a different symbolic order, the womb enables a matrixial transsubjective linking, between mother and child and between siblings who share this space, whether simultaneously or sequentially. The "separation-in-jointness" thus engendered is no new-age harmony; it entails first and foremost the inheritance of trauma from one generation to the next.[8] The effect of the potential for linkage initiated by the matrixial, however, reaches beyond the mother-child unit and beyond the family; this "matrixial awareness engenders a disturbing desire for jointness *with* a foreign world" (197). Ettinger's matrixial intervenes in psychoanalysis to open a space for female specificity that is not otherness but hybridity—that is, joint transformation in relationality.

Ettinger's reading attends to Antigone's own emphasis on the womb she shares with her brother.[9] In insisting on the mother's body as a locus of relationship formation throughout *Antigone*, Sophocles departs radically from Aeschylus's *Oresteia*, written about fifteen years earlier and frequently invoked as a foundational moment for all future patrilineage. In Aeschylus's trilogy, the order of law and the polis is established and maintained through a dispossession of the mother's stake in her children when Apollo inaugurates a court system and rules that the mother merely houses a growing fetus, without being related to it. The child thus belongs to the father alone, to whom the child owes allegiance.[10] Sophocles's *Antigone* establishes a very different concept of relatedness within the family. It is not Antigone alone who returns to the mother: the chorus stresses that Eteocles and Polyneices were "born of one father and mother" ("ὦ πατρὸς ἑνὸς / μητρός τε μιᾶς φύντε" [145; 144–45]). Antigone goes out of her way to further emphasize the role of the mother, referring to Polyneices in her self-justifications as "my mother's son" ("τὸν ἐξ ἐμῆς / μητρὸς" [467; 466–67]) and to both Eteocles and Polyneices as born "from the same innards" ("τοὺς ὁμοσπλάγχνους" [511; trans. mine]). When Creon challenges her by asking if Eteocles was not also "of the same blood" ("ὅμαιμος" [512; trans. mine]), Antigone weaves this emphatic affirmation: "Yes, indeed, of my own blood from father and mother" ("ὅμαιμος ἐκ μιᾶς τε καὶ ταὐτοῦ πατρός" [513]). In contrast to Aeschylus, Sophocles focuses on the womb as shared between siblings but, crucially, does not do so at the expense of the shared relationship with the father.

While Ettinger turns to the matrixial as the logic of relatedness that connects siblings and establishes a relationship with the world based on fusion rather than fission, she still erects a structure that, like Lacan's, relegates siblinghood to a position mediated primarily by a single parent. By insisting on both parents as the source of the sibling bond, however, Sophocles establishes the tie between siblings as always in excess of either the mother-child or the father-child relationship. The sibling relationship is multiply mediated through a set of nuanced differentials: resemblance between siblings, differential resemblance to each shared parent (biological or otherwise), and not-quite-duplicated positionality. The relationship with the sibling in turn mediates and refracts relations both within and beyond the family from a perspective not quite same and not quite other. This multiplicity of vectors erects siblinghood as a paradigm for the overdetermined embedding of the subject in the networked world, marking the insufficiency of theories of identification based on a linguistics of substitution.[11] Sibling logic resists the metaphoric economy of castration, instead following the model of synecdoche, a part-whole relationship that does not entirely relinquish the object it moves away from.[12]

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This synecdochal logic of the sibling initiates a limping, forward propulsion into a transsubjective world. Even more powerfully than the matrixial proposed by Ettinger, the logic of the sibling fosters "jointness *with* a foreign world" ("Transgressing" 197), a paradoxical cleaving of union and difference.

Sibling love thus both evokes and revokes the narcissism onto which it is so frequently read. In an early work, Lacan interprets the initial relationship with the sibling as the "confusion of two affective relationships in this object, love and identification" ("Family Complexes" 17).[13] Steiner similarly remarks, "It is here, and here only, that the soul steps into and through the mirror to find a perfectly concordant but autonomous counterpart. The torment of Narcissus is stilled: the image is substance, it is the integral self in the twin presence of another" (17). And yet, as this very formulation makes clear, the self-lover who moves from the position of Narcissus to that of the sibling lover has only exchanged one dilemma for another—the reflection in the water will never become embraceable, but the sibling will always defy all pressure to be a manifestation of the self. Indeed, far from re-presenting an integral self with which to identify, the sibling hinders the illusions of both autonomy and integrity. The structure of sibling relations in *Antigone* is much closer to Ettinger's transsubjectivity than to mirroring. As Lacan himself notes in one of his few references to Antigone's sister, "[T]he Greek term that expresses the *joining* of oneself to a brother or sister recurs throughout the play, and it appears right away in the first line when Antigone is speaking to Ismene " (*Ethics* 255; emphasis mine).

Plural Subjectivity and Incestuous Desire

Mark Griffith notes some of these joining expressions in his philological gloss to *Antigone*, line 523: "Ant. coins special terms to describe her own φύσιζ ['nature'] and its inextricable involvement in 'family': συνέχθω ['to join in hate'; 'to hate together'] and συνφιλέω ['to join in love'; 'to love together'] are found nowhere else in classical Greek" ("Commentary" 211–12).[14] In addition, variations on the word φιλία (*philia*) are used in abundance throughout *Antigone*. Mary Whitlock Blundell defines one axis of tension in the concept of φιλία as its broad trajectory from the narrowest point—the self-love from which Aristotle derives it—through parent-child and fraternal relations and finally to the widest extreme—"broad racial ties" (40–42). The other axis of tension is its affective tenor. Φιλία can designate the tie of duty, the emotion of love, and even erotic passion. While some commentators have noted a certain coldness in Antigone's obsession, her declaration "I shall lie by his side, / loving him as he loved me" ("φίλη μετ' αὐτοῦ κείσομαι, φίλου μέτα" [73–74; 73]) introduces the unmistakable aura of the incest that haunts the family.[15] The declaration of desire, however, is also a statement of identification: the sentence could be translated as "I will lie with him, a loved one with a loved one," so that the same word (*loved*, or φίλος, here used as an adjectival noun) in different grammatical cases and genders refers to both Antigone and Polyneices. Antigone's actions simultaneously express her desire and enact her membership in a family composed of the prematurely and tragically dead. To speak with Butler, "When she buries her brother, it is not simply that she acts from kinship, as if kinship furnishes a principle for action, but that her action is the action of kinship, the performative repetition that reinstates kinship as a public scandal" (*Antigone's Claim* 58). And yet not only the ritual quality of familial care in her deed but the fact that it condemns her to an early death marks Antigone in her own eyes as a true member of her family. In other words, it is simultaneously in the illicit burial and also in her death itself that the public scandal of her incestuous belonging is revealed and performed.

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Lacan goes so far as to read Antigone as the incarnation of "the pure and simple desire of death as such" (*Ethics* 282). Following in the footsteps of Hegel, for whom the brother represents "*pure being*" and "an empty singular" (*Phenomenology* 270, 271), Lacan transforms Polyneices into the brother per se, a structural position stripped of all contingent traits (*Ethics* 279). For Hegel, this structural understanding underlies ethical consciousness. While family is in general a natural relationship, it can attain to ethics by emptying itself of personal attachment: "the ethical connection between the members of the Family is not that of feeling, or the relationship of love" (*Phenomenology* 269). Hegel's interpretation of Antigone as a defender of familial ethics thus precludes desire from Antigone's motivation. Such emotion—that is, the right to a "particularity of desire" (275)—is reserved for men, who can actualize their ethical consciousness in the political sphere and hence do not need to do so within the family. For Hegel, as seen in the epigraph above, the sibling relationship epitomizes *pure* and unerotic ethical commitments. Lacan adapts this *purity* into a designation for Antigone's unswerving adherence to the law of her own desire.[16] And yet this so-called desire has not migrated far from Hegel's understanding of ethical commitment. Lacan's Antigone also figures the ethical, and Polyneices is still a structural position rather than a beloved person in his particularity; he is stripped of all contingent traits, of all history. He is amalgamated into the pure signifier, the phallus itself.

This interpretation of Polyneices as an empty signifier is not justified, however, by Sophocles's text. Lacan and Hegel have crucially misread *Antigone* in order to distance desire, and especially female desire, from particularistic attachment. It is just such particularity that Antigone demonstrates and that Ismene not only demonstrates but also explicitly defends. Lacan describes Polyneices's importance to Antigone as "having been born in the same womb… and related to the same [criminal] father. . . . [T]his brother is something unique" (*Ethics* 279). This claim to structural uniqueness is patently false. Antigone is one of four siblings born from the same womb and the same father—two brothers, both dead, and two sisters, both living as the drama opens—not to mention the half-brother born from the same womb who *is* her father. As Butler illustrates, Antigone's care for Polyneices is already a repetition of her care for her father-brother, Oedipus, whom in *Oedipus at Colonus* she also helps to his final resting place after serving as his guide while he ages (58–61). Moreover, Polyneices and Eteocles are hardly irreplaceable in the Theban dramas taken as a whole. Indeed, Oedipus describes them as replaced; having spurned their filial duty to their father, they have been replaced in caring for him by their sisters Antigone and Ismene, whom Oedipus thus calls "men" ("ἄνδρες" [Grene, *Oedipus at Colonus* 1368; see also 337–57; Lloyd-Jones 1368]). In a blatant transgression of gender norms, according to which women belonged exclusively in the household, Antigone has led her father around on the open roads of Greece, "a ready victim / to be seized and raped by anyone" ("τοὐπιόντος ἁρπάσαι" [Grene, *Oedipus at Colonus* 751–52; Lloyd-Jones 752]), as Creon makes explicit, while Ismene has tracked the pair down on horseback to warn them of Creon's schemes.

That both women can serve as substitutes for both men reinforces the fact that Antigone's decision to sacrifice herself for Polyneices cannot be seen as an ecstatic attachment to the pure form of siblinghood but becomes in the course of the play the elevation of one sibling above another, of Polyneices over Ismene, and hence the expression of particular choice. The play opens with Antigone's invitation to her sister to join her in burying their brother. Their conversation makes liberal use of the dual, an antiquated Greek grammatical form uniting two objects, and is dominated

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by rhetoric that implies merging (Steiner 208–09; Goldhill 145–46, 151–53). Once Ismene refuses to participate in her plan, however, Antigone's rhetoric reverses itself, and she labels Ismene a hated "enemy" ("ἐχθρὰ" [*Ant*. 94]). When Ismene later attempts to join Antigone in blame and punishment for the burial, Antigone repulses her. Most dramatically, in her lament before dying, Antigone calls herself "the last" of her line ("λοισθία" [895]), effectively "annulling Ismene" (Steiner 278). The results appear to have been lasting: Ismene not only disappears from the action of the play but also has remained hidden from the regard and notice of its readers and critics. Antigone's disowning of Ismene as a consequence of Ismene's choices and actions speaks directly against Lacan's description of the emptying of "historical drama" (*Ethics* 279)—of everything one might have done or lived through—from Antigone's consideration of family belonging. The slippage in Lacan's theory between the symbolic function of the phallus as the empty signifier and its continued sexual reference has led him to discount Ismene. But this should not be a problem as long as the love of two sisters for each other is after all and obviously, as Goethe laid out in the conversation with Eckermann quoted in the epigraph, unerotic, *geschlechtslos*. Except that here it is not.

Ismene's passion for Antigone in Sophocles's drama should make visible the particularity of feminine desire, both her own and that of Antigone for Polyneices. Ismene's attachment to her sister reaches the same transgressive heights as Antigone's passion for her brother Polyneices. This passion is expressed in words that mimic almost exactly Antigone's words to and about Polyneices in *Oedipus at Colonus* and *Antigone*. Although the action of *Antigone* occurs chronologically last among Sophocles's three Theban tragedies, this play was written first, followed by *Oedipus the King* about fifteen years later and finally by *Oedipus at Colonus* after an additional twenty years and just before Sophocles's death (Grene, Introduction 1–2). Since Polyneices's death in the attack on Thebes is foretold in *Oedipus at Colonus*, Antigone's attempt to convince him to abandon the fight is simultaneously a repetition and a foreshadowing of Ismene's identical attempt to dissuade Antigone from her doomed actions. When Antigone cries out to Polyneices, "Then I am utterly / destroyed if I must lose you" ("δυστάλαινά τἄρ' ἐγώ, / εἴ σου στερηθῶ" [Grene, *Oedipus at Colonus* 1446–47; Lloyd-Jones 1444–45]), she repeats and foretells Ismene's anguished question to her: "What life is there for me, once I have lost you?" ("καὶ τίς βίος μοι σοῦ λελειμμένηι φίλος;" [*Ant*. 548]). Left behind by a beloved sibling determined to die, both Antigone in *Oedipus at Colonus* and Ismene in *Antigone* describe themselves as "sufferer[s]" ("τάλαινα" [Grene, *Oedipus at Colonus* 1428, 1437; Lloyd-Jones 1427; *Ant*. 554]). Ismene's distress at abandonment evolves into her jealous reproach to Antigone for choosing the dead brother over the living sister: "You have a warm heart for such chilly deeds" ("θερμὴν ἐπὶ ψυχροῖσι καρδίαν ἔχεις" [*Ant*. 87]). Even Antigone's declaration of love for Polyneices discussed above, "I shall lie by his side, / loving him as he loved me," is almost immediately echoed by Ismene's reassurance that, however irrational Antigone's actions, "to your loved ones you rightly remain a loved one" ("τοῖς φίλοις δ' ὀρθῶς φίλη" [98–99; trans. mine]).[17] Once again, both instances of "loved one[s]" are indicated by different cases of φίλος. Finally, Antigone's "Brother, how can anyone / *not* mourn, seeing you set out / to death so clear before you?" ("καὶ τίς ἄν σ' ὀρμώμενον / ἐς προῦπτον Ἅιδην οὐ καταστένοι, κάσι;" [Grene, *Oedipus at Colonus* 1438–40; Lloyd-Jones 1439–40]) paradoxically expresses a mourning that will apply equally to her in the earlier (later) play.

While Butler comments on the aptness of this last line as a prefiguration of Antigone's own eventual progress toward death, she iron-

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ically overlooks the reiterative structure of the relationship between Antigone and Polyneices, on the one hand, and that between Ismene and Antigone, on the other. Butler's failure to notice Ismene is an outgrowth of centuries of disregard.[18] Luce Irigaray sums up the consensus opinion of Ismene as stereotypically feminine in contrast to Antigone, recounting her "weakness, her fear, her submissive obedience, her tears, madness, hysteria" (*Speculum* 217–18).[19] Reflections on Ismene center on two actions that appear contradictory—her attempt to dissuade Antigone from the burial, which has long been misunderstood as cowardice, and her attempt to join Antigone in death, regularly labeled hysteria. The two moments, however, are complementary consequences of her devotion to her sister, as she first tries to save Antigone from death and then attempts to share this death, reenacting Antigone's behavior toward Polyneices. Once we recognize the hysteria and submissiveness as misreadings, what remain are Ismene's articulations of the intense particularity of love and the acceptance of difference in love. Ismene not only assures Antigone that love rightly persists through disagreements (*Ant.* 98–99), she also counters Creon's structural understanding of the family in her attempt to dissuade Creon from executing Antigone, the fiancée of his own son, Haemon. Creon, foreshadowing Hegel, articulates a strictly substitutive position, declaring, "There are other fields for [Haemon] to plow." Ismene's response, "Not with the mutual love of him and her," values the personal over the universal ("ἀρώσιμοι γὰρ χἀτέρων εἰσὶν γύαι. / οὐχ ὥς γ' ἐκείνωι τῆιδέ τ' ἦν ἡρμοσμένα" [569–70]). By repeatedly situating Antigone in a loving community, Ismene also challenges Lacan's tendency to see Antigone as isolated at the limit of the human, a tendency that Antigone herself embraces. Ultimately, however, Ismene is unable to perform this repositioning on herself. Just as Antigone will choose death with Polyneices over life with her fiancé and Ismene, Ismene will also volunteer to die, unable to envision any life without or beyond Antigone. "What life can be mine *alone* without her?" ("τί γὰρ μόνηι μοι τῆσδ' ἄτερ βιώσιμον;" [566; emphasis mine]), she cries to Creon, intensifying with the addition of the word *alone* her earlier lament to Antigone (548).

Ismene's desire thus reiterates Antigone's as self-constitutive and all consuming. It has not helped critics understand Antigone's desire, however, because it has been invisible. Even Butler's mining of the implications of *Antigone* for queer readings is circumscribed in this peculiar omission by a received structural limit to desire that Butler herself has worked to destabilize. This limit is certainly heteronormative, but it also renders femininity contingent and masculinity normative while reinforcing an understanding of ethical feminine desire as impersonal and structural. At issue in this desire is the discreteness of the subject, the imaginary status of understanding "I" as wholly distinct from "you." Ismene, Antigone, and Polyneices make visible the construction of a joint subjectivity through multiple differentials. Their relationships reveal a splinter in the imaginary—a constant, pointed reminder of the necessary incompleteness of the mirror stage and an ever-present link with others. The itch to remove the splinter and allow an isolating skin to grow can be seen motivating the theoretical move from Antigone to Oedipus.[20]

Butler has worked to counter this isolation by linking the inner and outer relationality of the psyche. She recently identified the part of the self for which one cannot account, the part that renders each self nonself-identical and noncoherent, as the trace of our origin in intersubjectivity, "the way we are implicated, beholden, derived, sustained by a social world that is beyond us and before us" (*Giving* 64). This early and formative relationality is the opaque kernel rendered inaccessible to self-accounting by entry into the symbolic. And yet we must not forget

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that the relational does not end with this entry; the symbolic is assumed, conveyed, and constituted by relationships and remains a jointly occupied relational web. The limits to self-knowledge diagnosed by Butler are thus effects not only of a past, primal relationality but also of the ongoing openness of subjects.

Antigone has frequently been proclaimed a hero of self-knowledge, in contrast to Oedipus, whose story, Hegel tells us in his *Aesthetics*, is primarily concerned with fate and unconscious action (1214). It is, of course, precisely the specifics of his foundational relationality that remain hidden from Oedipus. But Oedipus is not entirely without knowledge; after all, he solves the riddle of the sphinx. August Wilhelm Schlegel recognized the irony that "to the very Oedipus who solved the riddle of the Sphinx relating to human life, his own life should remain so long an inextricable riddle" (163). Schlegel misidentifies the source of this irony, which he locates in the frequent human failure to apply general principles to oneself. Oedipus's life, however, fails to conform to the general principle of the riddle. If the human being, to answer the riddle, is what walks on four legs in the morning, two legs at noon, and three legs in the evening, Oedipus's humanity is in doubt. Exposed on a mountaintop by his parents as an infant, Oedipus was pierced through the feet by a leather thong to keep him from crawling. He reacts to the discovery of his transgression, moreover, by blinding himself and resorting to a walking stick, a third leg, in the prime of his life. Oedipus's problem is not the inability to apply general knowledge to the specific case of himself but the failure to imagine the violation of the norm that he embodies, the failure to recognize that some part of the human might lie beyond the boundaries of repeating normative structures.

Does Antigone truly represent a self-knowledgeable contrast, or does she resemble Oedipus in this failure? Hegel cites Antigone as an example of a premeditated breach of ethics (*Phenomenology* 284). Lacan goes further when he reminds us, "One cannot ignore the meaning of the kind of self-knowledge attributed to [Antigone]" by the chorus (*Ethics* 273). Lacan and Hegel may have been influenced by Hölderlin's idiosyncratic translation of *Antigone*, in which the chorus states, "Dich hat verderbt [d]as zornige Selbsterkennen" (905), a line that could be rendered in English as "Enraged self-knowledge has been your undoing" (trans. mine).[21] Grene's more standard translation of the Greek, supported by Griffith, reads, "[I]t is your own self-willed temper / that has destroyed you" ("σὲ δ' αὐτόγνωτος ὤλεσ' ὀργά" [875–76; 875]). Kathrin Rosenfield, while pointing out the philological legitimacy of the Grene formulation, nonetheless believes that Hölderlin (and by extension Hegel and Lacan) grasped a crucial element of Antigone's character through his rendition (120). It is doubtless true that Antigone knows the law of Creon, but does she therefore know her crime? Should we judge her static, self-assured, and death-directed self-interpretation as self-knowledge? Thinking of Butler, we might ask whether Antigone, with her insistence on family belonging, occupies a unique position of access to her own constitutive relationality and hence surpasses the normal limits of self-knowledge. I would like to resist such a reading; Antigone's justification of her crime as a necessary defense of family and divine law is an interpretation of the demands of relationality, not a transparent reading of it. Moreover, like Oedipus, she fails to imagine a way to deviate from a received pattern, although in her case that pattern is itself deviant. Antigone's interpretation is contested not only by Creon but also by that figure so defamed by criticism—her sister, Ismene. And it is Ismene whose name in fact means "one who knows." But what does she know?

Ismene's response to Antigone's demand that they bury their brother is not a recourse to a normative female role that they hold in common with their sex, as is frequently claimed, but instead follows from an alternative inter-

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pretation of their family's history, a history that separates the sisters from other women.

> O God!
> Consider, sister, how our father died,
> hated and infamous, how he brought to light
> his own offenses; how he himself struck out
> the sight of his two eyes;
> his own hand was their executioner.
> Then, mother and wife, two names in one,
> did shame
> violently on her life, with twisted cords.
> Third, our two brothers, on a single day,
> poor wretches, themselves worked out their
> mutual doom.
> Each killed the other, hand against brother's
> hand.
> Now there are only the two of us, left behind,
> and see how miserable our end shall be
> if in the teeth of law we shall transgress
> against the sovereign's decree and power.
> You ought to realize we are only women,
> not meant in nature to fight against men,
> and that we are ruled, by those who are
> stronger,
> to obedience in this and even more painful
> matters.
>
> οἴμοι· φρόνησον, ὦ κασιγνήτη, πατὴρ
> ὡς νῶιν ἀπεχθὴς δυσκλεής τ' ἀπώλετο,
> πρὸς αὐτοφώρων ἀμπλακημάτων διπλᾶς
> ὄψεις ἀράξας αὐτὸς αὐτουργῶι χερί·
> ἔπειτα μήτηρ καὶ γυνή, διπλοῦν ἔπος,
> πλεκταῖσιν ἀρτάναισι λωβᾶται βίον·
> τρίτον δ' ἀδελφὼ δύο μίαν καθ' ἡμέραν
> αὐτοκτονοῦντε τὼ ταλαιπώρω μόρον
> κοινὸν κατειργάσαντ' ἐπαλλήλοιν χεροῖν.
> νῦν δ' αὖ μόνα δὴ νὼ λελειμμένα σκόπει
> ὅσωι κάκιστ' ὀλούμεθ', εἰ νόμου βίαι
> ψῆφον τυράννων ἢ κράτη παρέξιμεν.
> ἀλλ' ἐννοεῖν χρὴ τοῦτο μὲν γυναῖχ' ὅτι
> ἔφυμεν, ὡς πρὸς ἄνδρας οὐ μαχουμένα,
> ἔπειτα δ' οὕνεκ' ἀρχόμεσθ' ἐκ κρεισσόνων
> καὶ ταῦτ' ἀκούειν κἄτι τῶνδ' ἀλγίονα. (49–64)

While the passage concludes with a reference to their sex, the claim does not have recourse to the appropriateness of gender norming but rather foretells the violent consequences of resisting force. The more significant and less frequently cited portion of the argument precedes these lines. Antigone believes that she has been born into a cursed family whom she is fated to join in a tragic death that will enact and confirm her identity. Ismene introduces a different interpretation, stressing in every line the self-willed actions that initiated and implemented the catastrophes. It is with their own hands that the family members become their own executioners. Moreover, each destructive action annihilates a multiple rather than a singular existence. Goldhill notes of this passage, "Nouns, verbs, and adjectives are all in the dual form. . . . [I]t makes the brothers a natural pair, like hands or eyes" (152). The dual units are themselves not closed to further linkage, however; Ismene reads the two brothers as a double unit and the two sisters as another, so that the units double each other. Ismene thus constructs a complicated denial of fatalism. Knowledge here is also acknowledgment and acceptance of the fact that narratives of self are always simultaneously narratives of many. There is agency, and yet no individual wields it or suffers its consequences alone.[22] Antigone acts in togetherness with a dead brother, and her actions will exert a similar pressure on her remaining sister.

And yet the sisters are by no means identical. While Antigone insists uncompromisingly on the universality of her principle of action, Ismene recognizes the differentials that create particularity, a recognition that pervades her emphasis on differing interpretations as well as her reassurance to Antigone of love even in the face of disagreement. The sisters constitute two nonidentical but transsubjective links in an alinear, synecdochal network. Ismene's plea makes clear that no singleton can exist in this family, that no *one* can be left behind—with or without a condemnation from Creon, Ismene will not survive her sister. Their jointness is by no means naively celebratory but instead stresses vulnerability. And so Antigone is not entirely wrong to pronounce herself the last

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survivor of the family of Oedipus—her death wraps up in itself Ismene's end as well.

Kinship, the Foreign, and the Collective

The synecdochal intertwining exemplified by these siblings extends subjectivity beyond the immediate family and into the polis and the political. Rosenfield diagnoses a taint of incest that pervades the entire Theban polis through the autochthonous and fatherless origins of its first generation (114). Thebes combined the two common Greek myths for the origin of cities: autochthony and colonization.[23] Cadmus, of the royal family of Phoenicia, founded the city of Thebes with the help of the Spartoi, warriors who sprang from the ground as offspring of the teeth of a dragon Cadmus had slain (*Spartoi* means "sown"). While the familial elements of the Greek polis are therefore blatant, autochthony in Thebes is ambivalent. The first act of the Spartoi is to attack one another in a mass fratricide. After the battle, only five remain to found the city with Cadmus and his wife, Harmonia. Instead of combining harmoniously the ruling passions of Harmonia's parents, Aphrodite and Ares, however, the city oscillates between forbidden extremes of love and strife.

The sibling bond, however fraught, is not only the foundation of the polis but also its justification. Cadmus originally left Phoenicia in search of his abducted sister, Europa. Unable to find her, he turned to the oracle at Delphi for a new purpose and founded Thebes on the oracle's instructions.[24] Thebes itself is therefore an ersatz for a sister, though no neatly metaphoric one; Thebes does not leave its antecedent—the sibling—behind but rather transforms and carries it within. In the shadow of Thebes, siblinghood must be read simultaneously as a bond to a home and the impetus to leave it. If, to paraphrase Hegel from the epigraph, the sibling is a mirror in which one becomes conscious of oneself through becoming conscious of an other to which one is not linked as cause or effect, as parent or as child, it is not, however, a mirror that reflects back an image as a unitary ego ideal; instead it casts a hybrid image forward into an uncertain, interpenetrating world. The sibling relationship is thus revealed as constitutive not only for subject formation but also for the human ability to explore territory, build cities, and come to terms with the foreign. This constellation of theoretical anxieties elevated the sibling relationship, and Sophocles's *Antigone* with it, to a central position in the European imaginary during the nineteenth century—an age of cultural encounter. Mitchell locates the sibling experience at the heart of all group psychology (12), speculating, "Does not the early sibling experience of creating 'otherness' out of sameness underlie the instant 'otherness' of race, class and ethnicity, an otherness that renders invisible the sameness that then has to be rediscovered at a greatly sophisticated level?" (48). We can, however, also turn this formulation around to see in the sibling experience a recognition of the coexistence of degrees of sameness and otherness.

"If psychoanalysis had taken Antigone rather than Oedipus as its point of departure," Miriam Leonard notes, sounding a theme that has become common in the last few years, "it would have given rise to a more explicitly politicized understanding of the psychoanalytic sexual subject" (122). Hegel read Antigone into an ethical narrative that is bound up with the political, but he did so in such a way as to exclude her as a woman and to exclude women as such from a public sphere envisioned as universal. For Hegel the sister serves as a bridge that enables the brother to cross—as she cannot—from the sphere of divine law to that of human law, moving from nature to spirit, from family to the political.[25] In the *Phänomenologie*, Hegel denotes the public sphere occasionally with the word *Regierung* ("government") and more often with the word *Gemeinwesen*.[26] In his

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standard translation, A. V. Miller renders *Gemeinwesen* as "community," and yet a better approximation might be "commonality"; Hegel's term indicates the being that is shared in common, rather than the messy community of particular beings.[27] In his analysis, Hegel thus reenacts the failed attempts of Creon to segregate the political from the personal and to interpret the polis as a set of collectivized subjects of government. Hegel is askew, for the polis is not a realm of commonality—of a universal, common voice—but a community of members who are, among other things, related to one another as a family is, tied together by the same bonds of φιλία. By reducing the polis to government, Hegel pares away the ancient resonances of relatedness within community that had become increasingly germane in the burgeoning nationalist discourse of his time, including his own discourse.[28] As Stuart Elden has argued, the "polis functions both as a place, a site, and the embodiment of the humans within it, close to our modern notion of community" (2). Moreover, "[t]he Greek *polis* was founded on kinship" (30) and united by an origin myth that depended equally on kinship, whether grounded in autochthony or colonization.

A dual origin in autochthony and colonization differentiates Thebes from Athens, the city of Sophocles and the location where his dramas were enacted. Froma Zeitlin has identified the Thebes of tragedy as an uncanny other of Athens, a site where the home polis of author and viewers "acts out questions crucial to the *polis*, the self, the family and society" "without any risk to its own self-image" (144, 145). As Nicole Loraux notes, Athens, as opposed to Thebes, considered itself a fully autochthonous city and used the myth of fraternal autochthony to derive its democracy. Indeed, Athenians believed that the resulting sameness of citizens in their polis "protected the Athenians from the great familial crimes which are represented in tragedy," as from "oligarchies and tyrannies" (53, 22). The equality of citizens was not conceived in the abstract terms of rights before the law but in terms of the homogeneity of kinship (52). But while Thebes may present a dark contrast to Athens on this point, it is hard to agree with Zeitlin's premise that the contrast makes Thebes a *safe* locus for experimentation. Rather, Thebes exposes what lies latent and threatening in the fabric of the community: the fraught relationship of community to place, the fragility of belonging, and the excess of desire and of hate that inhabits and indeed necessitates the bonds of duty.

These issues become explicit in the famous choral ode in *Antigone* known as the "Hymn to Man." The chorus locates the essence of humanity in a dual origin—both journeying and working the soil:

Many are the wonders, none
is more wonderful than what is man.
This it is that crosses the sea . . .
He it is again who wears away
the Earth, oldest of gods, immortal, unwearied,
as the ploughs wind across her from year to
year . . .
. . . . . .
So he brings the horse with the shaggy neck
to bend underneath the yoke;
and also the untamed mountain bull;
and speech and windswift thought
and the tempers that go with city living
he has taught himself . . .

πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ κοὐδὲν ἀν-
θρώπου δεινότερον πέλει·
τοῦτο καὶ πολιοῦ πέραν
πόντου . . .
χωρεῖ . . .
. . . θεῶν
τε τὰν ὑπερτάταν, Γᾶν
ἄφθιτον, ἀκαμάταν ἀποτρύεται,
ἰλλομένων ἀρότρων ἔτος εἰς ἔτος,
. . . . . .
. . . λασιαύχενά θ'
ἵππον ὑπαγάγετ' ἀμφίλοφον ζυγὸν
οὔρειόν τ' ἀκμῆτα ταῦρον.
καὶ φθέγμα καὶ ἀνεμόεν

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φρόνημα καὶ ἀστυνόμους
ὀργὰς ἐδιδάξατο . . . (332–56)

This ode performs a delicate feat, identifying a human essence while acknowledging as fundamental the human ability to learn, change, and exist both communally and politically—that is, within history. In his interpretation of *Antigone*, Heidegger focused on this ode to illuminate a critical constellation of identity and foreignness, of journeying and dwelling, at the heart of the play (*Hölderlin's Hymn* and *Introduction*). His reading, nonetheless, as Cornelius Castoriadis and Stathis Gourgouris separately argue, performs a violent misreading of the tragedy by excising the political and historical concerns that structure these terms for Sophocles. Heidegger posits as universal the isolated human being, alienated from self, home, and community, while the ode projects this specter as the nightmare limit of human experience, a limit catastrophically arrived at by Antigone and Creon both but countered by human self-creation as communicative and communal.[29] Creon and Antigone each violate what Gourgouris refers to as "a differential autonomous plurality" that "does not only constitute in itself a political subject, but . . . also embodies the subject of a specific politics, a politics which demands a collective knowledge emerging out of a shared commitment to self-interrogation" (141). What is required for an ethical and successful political community is thus a recognition of and respect for difference, combined with self-analysis. I am sympathetic to Gourgouris's argument, and yet I would counter that Antigone's flaw does not lie in her law's singularity, because her law arises, in fact, out of a shared subjectivity. Her flaw consists instead in her failure to recognize her ultimate belonging to the living community, as a result of the lack of self-interrogation he diagnoses.

With their emphasis on both journeying and dwelling, Sophocles's Theban dramas undermine not only the boundaries of the subject within the community but also the boundaries of the community itself, the possibility of erecting belonging that evades foreignness. The stranger Oedipus who journeys to Thebes and wins the hand of its queen discovers only too late that he has returned to his most intimate point of origin; Polyneices, who attacks Thebes with an army he has become related to through marriage, is nonetheless a native son; and Creon, who casts out and condemns his niece and son's fiancée, Antigone, finds that he has brought ruin and destruction to his most immediate family. Perhaps one could claim that Thebes is cursed by its lack of purity—its mixing of the foreign Phoenician with the indigenous soil—but the chorus claims it belongs to all human beings to journey and to bring forth from the soil, and it thus locates Thebes at the core of the human.

A litany of lost siblings: Europa—lost to her brother Cadmus; Oedipus, Polyneices, and Eteocles—lost to Antigone and Ismene; Antigone and Ismene—lost to each other; Ismene—lost to the critical tradition; and the sibling per se—lost to psychoanalytic theory. What we have lost with them is a notion of shared subjectivity, interconnectedness, similarity in difference, and group belonging outside the stark terms of otherness versus introjection. Embracing sibling logic would make possible a politics that discards dichotomies in favor of differentials, one that recognizes the subject within networks and vice versa.

Antigone and Ismene are the last descendants of Cadmus and Harmonia through the male line the Greeks considered direct descent. Yet their eradication cannot be read as the purging of a catastrophic foreign element from an otherwise indigenous population. The sacred spring at which Cadmus arrived after his wanderings was the *Ismenos*, and the dragon he slew and whose teeth generated the Theban population was the *Ismenian* dragon (*Ant.* 1122). In a Möbius movement characteristic of Thebes, *Ismene* oscillates from progeni-

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tor of the autochthonous Spartoi to childless terminus of the colonizing lineage, encapsulating the entire history of Theban tragedy.[30] Ismene may represent a certain failure to mark the world with one's own hands, but she alone in her family escapes using her hands as tools of murder or suicide. Instead, she leaves behind a disposition worth pondering. The hero of Greek tragedy, as Gourgouris eloquently states, "is hardly a model but a problem, an agent of ambiguity and uncertainty about himself and all others" (129). In a world that acknowledges agency, but even more strongly in a world of shared agency and plural subjectivity, a problem well illustrated offers the potential for learning and changing, for breaking cycles of repetition without relinquishing particular passion. That at least is what Ismene knew and what she attempted to convey to her sister. Perhaps it is not too late to hear her.

Notes

1. Goethe and Johann Peter Eckermann are discussing the work of Hegel's student H. F. W. Hinrichs on tragedy, but since Hinrichs follows Hegel here, Goethe's objections can also be referred back to Hegel.

2. Butler nonetheless opens the door to a relational reading of Antigone, as we shall see.

3. In spite of its title, Cecilia Sjöholm's nuanced *The Antigone Complex* resists erecting a structure parallel to the oedipal. By limiting herself to the figure of Antigone, particularly in modern criticism, however, Sjöholm loses the ability to reach outside pervasive misreadings.

4. There is no single defining relationship in this play. However, I will attend to the undertheorized relationship between Antigone and Ismene to unsettle readings and theories that resolve sibling relations into parent-child relations.

5. Mitchell and Prophecy Coles, building on early work by Melanie Klein, have recently attempted to address sibling relations in psychoanalytic theory.

6. Antigone's brothers, Polyneices and Eteocles, have killed each other in a struggle over the throne, leaving Creon (their mother's brother and father's uncle and brother-in-law) ruler of Thebes. Although Polyneices has attacked Thebes with a foreign army, Creon's interpretation of him as a vicious enemy of the city and Eteocles as its honorable defender is strained by the fact that Polyneices is the elder son (Sophocles, *Oedipus at Colonus* 375–76).

7. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations of *Antigone* in English are from Grene's edition. Quotations in Greek are from Griffith. The oddity of these lines has prompted some commentators to hope that they were a later interpolation. Goethe considered the tone of the passage too legalistic for a girl on the verge of death (175), while others have objected to the elevation of brother over husband and children. Contemporary philology supports the lines' authenticity. For a history of the controversy and a justification of the lines' legitimacy, see Griffith, "Commentary" 277–78.

8. Ettinger is particularly concerned with the transmission of trauma from Holocaust survivors to later generations. See *Matrixial Borderspace*, esp. 123–57, 162–69.

9. Ettinger is not alone in stressing this emphasis. Lacan notes the use of the word *adelphos*, which means "womb mate" (*Ethics* 255). Irigaray also relates their "co-uterine attraction" to the power of shared blood (*Speculum* 216), which is, however, subordinated to the patronymic, the symbolic, so that in Lacan, as in Hegel, the sister exists as a medium through which the brother arrives at his individuating self without any benefit to her (221). Pushing on Irigaray's reading, Carol Jacobs rehabilitates Antigone as a threat to patronymy, seeing in her insistence on the womb a reenactment of motherhood that "leaves no room for a clear oppositional struggle, for she who would bury Polyneices and give him meaning and form also produces or rather has already produced the dispersal of that form-giving" (910). While I appreciate Jacobs's reading, I think there is much to be gained by following more assiduously the role of the sister without reverting to the role of the mother.

10. This is not the place to plumb the substantial history of criticism on the *Oresteia*. For brief discussions of Aeschylus's trilogy in the context of *Antigone*, see Goldhill 149–52 and Sjöholm 31–34.

11. The concept of identity and identity politics in relation to such identifications is a major point of contention today, particularly in gender and queer studies. Engaging this debate lies outside the scope of this article. For a selection of views, see Rose, esp. 49–83; Benjamin, *Bonds* and esp. *Shadow* 35–78; Butler, *Gender Trouble*; Weir; and Dean.

12. Irigaray has provided a powerful critique of Lacan's phallic, metaphoric logic throughout her work and, particularly in *This Sex* and *Speculum*, has argued for the feminine fluidity of metonymy, of two lips touching, of mother-infant proximity. Naomi Schor has pushed on both Lacanian and Irigarayan readings to undermine an oppositional binary of metaphor and metonymy in favor of the detail, the part, the clitoris, and hence the synecdochal (*Breaking* and *Reading*). My use of the synecdochal departs from Schor's by interrogating the boundaries of the whole to which the part can refer. A detail, I argue

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here, is always a shared component, although a subject is unique in its combinatorics. Synecdoche thus works as a link. Since the detail is not only or always the sexual organ, we can use synecdoche to move beyond the impasse of Irigaray's sexuation, the "irreducible difference, that which separates human being itself without a possible overcoming of this division" (*Way* 10).

13. Significantly, bridging the polarity of identification and object choice is central to Freud's discussion of group psychology.

14. Grene translates the line in question as "My nature is to join in love, not hate" ("οὔτοι συνέχθειν ἀλλὰ συμφιλεῖν ἔφυν").

15. Nussbaum in particular denies that Antigone is "a loving or passionate being in anything like the usual sense" (65). Blundell argues persuasively, however, that Antigone's repetition of *phil-* words when speaking of Polyneices indicates "the special character of her devotion" (108).

16. Antigone's self-law-giving characteristic is noted by the chorus with the word "autonomos" ("αὐτόνομος" [821]). While Grene folds this word into the phrase "it was your own choice," Griffith translates it directly as "observing your own law" ("Commentary" 268). Butler (*Antigone's Claim* 11) and Gourgouris (146–47) discuss this autonomy as well.

17. Griffith points out that Ismene here concedes Antigone's position of loyalty to family above all else ("Commentary" 138–39). I shift the emphasis to argue that in her attitude toward Antigone, Ismene repeats Antigone's attitude toward Polyneices. There is a difference worth mentioning, though: Ismene's use of the plural conveys a wider sense of a living and loving community that Antigone's behavior repudiates.

18. Disregard for Ismene can be considered part of a larger blindness to relationships between women, paradigmatically noted by Virginia Woolf in *A Room of One's Own* (82–85). With respect to antiquity, scholars have begun to redress this deficiency (e.g., Rabinowitz and Auanger; Goldhill).

19. While many critics pass over Ismene in silence, Goethe considered her a "standard of the commonplace" against which Antigone's greatness would appear more striking (177). In a similar move, Griselda Pollock has called Ismene "the unaffecting cipher to Antigone's tragic beauty" (100). Nussbaum alters the valence on Ismene's weeping by acknowledging it as an expression of "felt love" (64).

20. In a milder form, it already inhabited the analyses of *Antigone* and the multiple iterations of sibling attachment in the long nineteenth century that invoked exclusively brother-sister relationships. The theory of gender complementarity provided a means to recuperate wholeness by moving from a singularity to a dyad.

21. Hölderlin's translation of *Antigone* was greeted with derision when it was published but has since been acknowledged as an extraordinary interpretation of the original. For more see Schadewaldt; Rosenfield.

22. Zeitlin emphasizes the "double determination by which action is predicated on both internal and external agency" (162n44), and Rosenfield notes Antigone's "realization that her conscious desire … is inextricably linked to an even deeper, ancestral impulse" (112). While Rosenfield's formulation gestures toward a joint fate, neither addresses the possibility of joint agency.

23. See Loraux for the two competing myths and Thebes as their combination (13–14).

24. Cadmus was instructed to follow a marked cow to the site where he should settle. Europa had been carried off by Zeus in the form of a bull, so the cow symbolically gestures to a fulfillment of Cadmus's quest.

25. Hegel, by opposing a feminine familial sphere to a masculine public one, famously renders woman the "everlasting irony [in the life] of the community" (*Phenomenology* 288). Many objections to Hegel's interpretation have been raised, particularly the unsuitedness of Antigone to represent kinship given the muddled tangle of her incestuous relationships, and the inaptness of forcing her into a model of femininity given the ambiguous and transgressive formulation of her gender in the play. As Butler argues, "[T]here is no uncontaminated voice with which Antigone speaks" (*Antigone's Claim* 88n1). A similar list of difficulties exists for Hegel's positioning of Creon as representative of the civic sphere.

26. *Phänomenologie* 240–63. In *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, Hegel briefly reprises his interpretation of *Antigone* and uses the word *Staat* (237–62).

27. Steiner translates Hegel's term as "communal totality" (33). Elden provides a detailed commentary on the inadequacy both of Miller's use of *community* for Hegel's term and of Hegel's and Butler's focus on *state* as a rendition of *polis* (Elden, esp. 35–37). My use of the word *community* will not carry the sense of Hegel's abstracted *Gemeinwesen* but will instead refer to a set of human beings living together.

28. Hegel saw nationality as a subset of race—i.e., embedded in the same natural, familial heritage (*Enzyklopädie*, secs. 392–95). However, all such natural tendencies were capable of being superseded by spirit.

29. See Castoriadis on self-creation, esp. 150–51.

30. See Zeitlin for more on circularity and repetition in Thebes (153–56).

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