Adapting to Resist:

Epistemic Resistance in Twenty-First Century *Antigone*s

Ekin Bodur Bayraktaroğlu

King's College

This dissertation is submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

June 2023

Declaration

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. It is not substantially the same as any work that has already been submitted before or is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. It does not exceed the prescribed word limit; regulation length, including footnotes, references and appendices but excluding the bibliography, for the Faculty of English Degree Committee. The thesis conforms to the MLA Handbook for the Writers of Research papers (8th Edition).

Abstract

Adapting to Resist: Epistemic Resistance in Twenty-First Century *Antigone*s

Ekin Bodur Bayraktaroğlu

My thesis explores how Sophocles' *Antigone* is reworked in Britain, Ireland, and Turkey in the 21st century to represent and enact political resistance. My contention is that *Antigone* constitutes a form of epistemic resistance in relation to current political issues, such as immigration, women's liberation, war in the Middle East, and necropolitics. By closely examining various rewritings of *Antigone* both in theory and in performance, I observe that in the 21st century, adapting *Antigone* has taken an epistemic turn that parallels the turn in political theory with increased emphasis on language, discourse and speech acts. These works dislocate the centre of gravity in the established readings of the tragedy to make space for new resistant narratives and practices to emerge. For them, the burial issue at the heart of the play, *what* Antigone does, i.e., Antigone's burial of her brother against the king's edict, is no longer central; instead, what comes to the forefront is *how* Antigone resists the sovereign through her speech acts. My work proposes a reading of postcolonial / Global South theatrical and literary adaptations of *Antigone* alongside political theory from the Global South, such as Achille Mbembe's necropolitics, Banu Bargu's necroresistance, and Andrés Fabián Henao Castro's reformulation of the *metic* for strangers (refugees, undocumented immigrants, noncitizens) in the 21st century in response to the recent work of Judith Butler and Bonnie Honig on *Antigone* from the field of political theory. In the case of Britain, I discuss Kamila Shamsie's diasporic novel *Home Fire* (2017) and Inua Ellams' *Antigone* (2022) in relation to citizenship and belonging of Britain's Muslims. In the case of Ireland, I focus on Colm Tóibín's *Pale Sister* (2019) and Darren Murphy's *X'ntigone* (2022) to scrutinize how Ireland's postcolonial status facilitates a critique of neocolonialism and imperialist wars in recent years, especially in the Middle East. Finally, in the case of Turkey, I examine Şahika Tekand's *Eurydice's Cry* (2007) and look into the rise of right-wing populisms and dictatorial models, as well as Berfin Zenderlioğlu's Kurdish version, *Antigone2012* to rethink enforced disappearances in Turkey, Kurdistan. Through these case studies, my thesis puts literary adaptations and theory from the Global North and Global South in a generative conversation to highlight the entanglement of literature, postcolonial epistemologies, and counter-sovereign politics.

Acknowledgements

I would firstly like to thank my supervisor, Jennifer Wallace for her kindness, generosity, and the many conversations we have had together. I would also like to thank my college tutor, Laura Davies for her support and belief in me; Simon Goldhill, from whom I have learnt so much; and Zoë Svendsen, whose dramaturgical approach contributed significantly to the early stages of my thesis. I would further like to thank Şahika Tekand, Berfin Zenderlioğlu, and Inua Ellams for talking to me about their work and sharing their materials with me. I am thankful to the various archivists at APGRD, especially Zoe Jennings at Archive Performances of Greek and Roman Drama (APGRD), Ediz Baysal at Istanbul State Theatre Archive, and Derya Kayacan at Ankara State Theatre Archives, as well as the staff at various Cambridge libraries, particularly UL, King's, and English Faculty Libraries.

This thesis was supported by generous funding from Trinity College's MCSC Scholarship and Cambridge Trust PhD Scholarship. Furthermore, grants and and awards from British Federation of Women Graduates (Funds for Women Graduates), Classical Association, Cambridge Political Economy Society, Faculty of English, and King's College have enabled the completion of this thesis. Thanks to the CRASSH Conference Support to organise a conference in Cambridge, I was able to learn from discussions with colleagues and theatre practitioners including Clare L. E. Foster, Andrés Fabián Henao Castro, Tina Chanter, Ankhi Mukherjee, Astrid Van Weyenberg, Murat Daltaban, Özlem Daltaban, and Eylem Ejder. I would also like to thank Natasha Remoundou for her generosity in sending me the copy of a play that I could not find anywhere else.

I started writing this thesis around the time of the global pandemic of Covid-19 as a single mother alone in the UK. With all family in Turkey, the isolation was unprecedented. I lost touch with a network of colleagues and events, which impacted my overall experience of PhD study. I am deeply grateful for having come across Kel Weinhold of *The Professor's In* and attending both her Unstuck Programme and co-writing sessions. I have also been lucky for the support of my friends. My conversations with my sister/friend İmge Oranlı have been formative in the process of developing key ideas. Ruba Salih and Sertaç Sehlikoğlu have been very supportive through

various stages of writing. I have received a lot of support, especially in childcare, from my adopted Cambridge family Berfin, Nurten, and Bayram Barlas, as well as Keren Uziyel and Jossy Sayir. It was thanks to my father, Engin Bodur, who stayed with us for extended periods before and after the pandemic, took on childcare and looked after us that I was able to progress with my writing. My mother, Sevil Özgenel, was my supporting pillar as always. My partner, Özden İnan Çölmekçi, made the world a better place when it seemed to be falling apart.

But most importantly, I would like to thank my daughter Dünya Kurtuluş Bayraktaroğlu who was so generous, kind and patient even though I devoted some of our time to research. I have been so lucky to have her to cheer me on.

This thesis, as all my past and future work, is devoted to the loving memory of Ulaş Bayraktaroğlu, my life companion and father to my daughter, whom we lost so untimely in 2017. I have been driven to the study of tragedy through the questions his presence and absence in this world raised in me.

Contents

Introduction 1

i. A Modern Genealogy of *Antigone* 3

ii. Postcolonial Tragedy and Counter-Discourse 10

iii. Resisting Contemporary Forms of Sovereignty 13

iv. *Antigones* in Recent Scholarship 14

v. Epistemic Violence and Epistemic Resistance 19

vi. Defining Adaptation: Translation, New Version, Remaking / Rewriting 31

vii. Thesis Outline 33

viii. Note on Texts, Translations, Interviews, and Performances 35

Chapter I: Mobilizing *Antigone* for a Performative Politics of Resistance 37

1. 1. Judith Butler's *Antigone's Claim* 38

1. 2. Bonnie Honig's *Antigone, Interrupted* 51

Chapter II: Britain's *Metics*: Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* and Inua Ellams' *Antigone* 63

2. 1. Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* 68

2. 2. Inua Ellams' *Antigone* 71

3. 3. Adapting Tragic Form 73

3. 4. Counter-Discourse and Britain's Metics 78

Chapter III: Irish *Antigone*s: Is it worth a handful of dust on Polyneices? 98

3. 1. Adapting *Antigone* in Ireland 101

3. 2. Colm Tóibín's *Pale Sister* 106

3. 3. Darren Murphy's *X'ntigone: after Sophocles* 118

Chapter IV: "Come, death!": *Antigone* as Necroresistance in Turkey 132

4. 1. Mobilizing *Antigone* Outside Theatre 133
4. 1. 1. Antigone as Hunger Striker 134
4. 1. 2 Selçuk Kozağaçlı's Court Defence 136

4. 2. *Antigone*s on the Turkish and Kurdish Stages 138
4. 2. 1. Kemal Demirel's *Antigone* 139
4. 2. 2. Şahika Tekand's *Eurydice's Cry* 141
4. 2. 3. *Antigone2012* 158

Conclusion 168
Bibliography 175

Introduction

There has been growing worldwide interest in the reinterpretation of Attic tragedies - and in particular *Antigone* - in performance and critical thought over the last few decades[1]. At a time of a global economic and political crisis, shrinking democratic structures, neocolonial occupations and regional wars, this recent interest in Greek tragedy might be linked to a desire to find antecedents and rethink suffering in the contemporary world. This thesis is an inquiry into how Sophocles' *Antigone* is reimagined in the 21st century to represent political resistance primarily in the form of epistemic resistance that aims at carving out a space for the silenced narratives of those who are constantly denied agency. The works that I focus on engage with current political crises affecting Europe and the Middle East, such as war, migration, women's rights, and necropolitics. Through them, I scrutinize how *Antigone*, traditionally read as a foundational text for the Western canon, is mobilized to respond to political conflicts, especially in the post-9/11 global political atmosphere, and how these reworkings circulate across the Middle East and Europe.

My research is based on the methodology of performance philosophy, "an emerging interdisciplinary and international field of thought, creative practice, and scholarship… concerned with the relationship between performance and philosophy". (Ó Maoilearca and Lagaay 1). My approach does not prioritize either performance or philosophy, but it is one in which close readings of theoretical texts and plays / performances inform one another. I consider engagements with *Antigone* from within the field of political theory as performative, and *Antigone*s in performance as expanding the field of political intervention.

In bringing together a new performance philosophy of *Antigone*, I start with two works that have made a case for a performative politics of resistance in the tragedy: Judith Butler's *Antigone's Claim* (2000) and Bonnie Honig's *Antigone, Interrupted* (2013). I examine Butler and Honig's discussion of *Antigone* alongside the theory of epistemic violence and resistance;

[1] See for example, Erin B. Mee and Helene P. Foley, eds. *Antigone on the Contemporary World Stage* (2011) Oxford: Oxford UP; S. E. Wilmer and Audronė Žukauskaitė, eds. *Interrogating Antigone in Postmodern Philosophy and Criticism* (2010) Oxford: Oxford UP; Helene P. Foley and Jean Howard. Introduction to *PMLA* Special Issue on Tragedy (2014); Tina Chanter and Sean D. Kirkland, eds. *The Returns of Antigone: Interdisciplinary Essays* (2014) Albany: SUNY; Fanny Söderbäck, ed. *Feminist Readings of Antigone* (2010) Albany: SUNY.

however, I also find it noteworthy that they do not engage in a dialogue with contemporary *Antigone*s in their historical and global multiplicity. I argue that these theoretical works would benefit greatly from the perspectives introduced by these adaptations. In order to further develop Butler and Honig's ideas around political agency, I propose to analyse contemporary theatrical and literary adaptations of *Antigone* with political theory from Hannah Arendt's writings on statelessness in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1976), Achille Mbembe's conceptualization of necropower in *Necropolitics* (2018), Banu Bargu's analysis of necroresistance in *Starve and Immolate* (2014), and Andrés Fabián Henao Castro's proposal to reinvent Antigone's *metic* status for strangers (refugees, undocumented immigrants, noncitizens) in the 21st century in *Antigone in the Americas* (2013). Developing these perspectives, I start by offering a close reading of Kamila Shamsie's novel adaptation *Home Fire* (2017) and Inua Ellams' *Antigone* (2022), which draw on the lives of Britain's Muslim population in relation to citizenship and belonging. Secondly, I focus on Colm Tóibín's *Pale Sister* (2019) and Darren Murphy's *X'ntigone* (2022) to scrutinize how Ireland's postcolonial status facilitates a critique of neocolonialism and imperialist wars, especially in the Middle East. Finally, I examine Şahika Tekand's *Eurydice's Cry* (2007) and look into the rise of right-wing populism and dictatorships around the world through a discussion of necroresistance, as well as Berfin Zenderlioğlu's Kurdish version, *Antigone2012* (2012) that rethinks enforced disappearances as seen from Turkey, Kurdistan.

By closely examining various rewritings of *Antigone* both in political theory and in adaptations in Britain, Ireland, and Turkey, I observe that in the 21st century, a particular approach to political resistance has come to prominence in *Antigone* productions. Different from earlier 20th century versions that concentrate on Antigone's resistant politics as reflected through the burial of her brother, I argue that adapting *Antigone* in the later 20th and 21st centuries has taken an epistemic turn that parallels a similar turn in political theory with increased emphasis on language, discourse and speech acts. In other words, the attention shifts from what Antigone *does* -Antigone's deed- to what Antigone *says* -Antigone's epistemic status. These recent works are no longer majorly interested in the act of burial, which is central to the 20th century versions. Instead, they question the validity of the sovereign's claim to power and whether the dominant state narrative reflects the truth. Therefore, they advocate for resisting the epistemic violence that aims at erasing alternative narratives. The struggle is to be heard, seen, and to transcend the unacknowledged subaltern position by putting the legitimacy of the canonical figure of Antigone into use. Secondly, even though the emphasis is on the epistemic quality of Antigone's resistance, this is by no means limited to a resistance within the confines of language. What

comes up is a performative understanding of epistemology; it is the various speech acts, especially those of Antigone, that do something at the moment of their utterance, as well as performative action that makes a statement through enactment. Therefore, the main concern is neither just discursive, nor textual. In order to argue for this performative understanding of epistemic resistance, I turn to the postcolonial critique of epistemic violence in Gayatri Spivak in "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988), to the analytic philosophy of Miranda Fricker on epistemic injustice in *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing* (2007) and José Medina on the epistemology of resistance in *The Epistemology of Resistance* (2013), as well as Judith Butler's understanding of performativity and speech act theory in *Excitable Speech* (1997).

i. A Modern Genealogy of *Antigone*

The idea of rethinking classical tragedies, and *Antigone* in particular, in order to interrogate modern issues started as a philosophical concern with German Idealism in the nineteenth century[2]. Historically, this corresponds to the revolutionary period in Europe from the French revolution in 1789 to the pan-European revolutions of 1848 and the emergence of nationalism when figures like Schelling, Hegel, and Hölderlin responded to Kant's ideas of necessity and freedom, free will, and the ethics of political action through a discussion of Attic tragedy, especially *Oedipus Tyrannus* and *Antigone*. Considering its central role in relation to questions around human agency, Simon Goldhill claims that tragedy becomes "a route to the self-definition of modernity" (*Sophocles and the Language of Tragedy* 149). Goldhill also details how German nationalism in the nineteenth century asserted "a genealogical link between Greek art as the most perfect form of the past and German art as the promise of contemporary art" (151). As a prominent discussion within German Idealist thinking, the conceptualization of tragedy is also born out of a dialectical relationship between the claimed universalism of the ancient Greeks and the contemporaneity of German nationalism. Thus, tragedy also becomes a route to define concepts like nation, country, and revolution.

It was in this period that *Antigone* gained a prominent place to scrutinize the ethical and political life of the nation and the role of the individual in it. This renewed purpose for the Sophoclean drama not only had a huge impact on the later productions of the play, but also rewrote its meaning for modernity and positioned it within philosophical discourse. Two major

[2] For a detailed discussion, see Simon Goldhill, Miriam Leonard and Joshua Billings.

figures that radically shaped the modern reception of *Antigone* were Friedrich Hölderlin with his translation of *Antigone* and "Notes" to his translation (1804) and G. W. F. Hegel especially with *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807). Hölderlin's translation was influential on subsequent adaptations such as Bertolt Brecht's *Antigone*, which in turn also had considerable impact on later reworkings. In his "Notes", Hölderlin comments that "The rational form here developing tragically is political, indeed republican, because between Creon and Antigone […] the balance is held too equally" (118). Hence, his views reflect the conflation of the national sentiment with the classical tragedy, in which the plot of *Antigone* represents "the nation" or "mother country" in a moment of revolution, "caught up in an infinite reversal and shaken through and through by it" (117).

Hegel's interpretation of Spirit in *The Phenomenology of Spirit,* informed by his reading of *Antigone* as divided within itself and characterized by the clash between divine law and human law, set the ground rules for modernity in the philosophical appreciation of the tragedy. Hegel defines Spirit as the condition of Reason in its self-consciousness and the actuality of ethical substance (*Sittlichkeit*). The human law, represented by the state, and by analogy Creon, is the principle of universality, enacted by the free citizens of the state. Citizenship is a gendered category according to Hegel and it belongs to men. In contrast, the Divine Law, represented by the family, and by analogy Antigone, is the inner notion of the ethical order, and it is the principle of individuality, enacted by those who are not citizens, namely, women. Reading history through the tragedy of *Antigone*, Hegel concludes that in the clash and mutual downfall of the two powers, the ethical consciousness achieves self-consciousness, which brings history forward. Only with the tragic downfall can the conscious essence come to know itself as self-consciousness in its dialectical unity with its anti-thesis. Therefore, according to Hegel, history has a tragic structure, which he sees as characterized by the clash and mutual annihilation of contrasting powers in a way to be sublated into a superior form. In the long century of revolutions in Europe when state structures were in a radical process of change, Hegel regarded *Antigone* as a play in which the central conflict of modernity gets to be played out. This interpretation by Hegel altered the fate of the play significantly.

The effect of the German Idealists' - and particularly Hegel's - thinking on modernity is manifold. On the one hand, they invented a new category of "the tragic", characterized by not only conflict, annihilation, and suffering, but also self-consciousness. It is for this reason that Peter Szondi made the famous comment "Since Aristotle, there has been a poetics of tragedy.

Only since Schelling has there been a philosophy of the tragic" (*An Essay on the Tragic* 1). Further exploring the genealogy of the concept, Joshua Billings underscored that it was this systematic modern theorization of tragedy that created a sense of "a continuity in the genre from antiquity to the present" (*The Genealogy of the Tragic* 1). According to Goldhill, by elaborating on this category within a historicized reading of political agency, the German Idealists established "a philosophical regime" around this concept ("The Ends of Tragedy" 233). Goldhill explains that "Generalizing about the tragic takes tragedy from the sphere of literary genre and establishes it as a means to comprehend the self as a political, psychological, and religious subject" (233). The suffering individual or "the internal conflicts of the ethical agent in historical context" (233-234) become central in this modern interpretation of tragedy as opposed to Aristotle's definition of tragedy in which action is central. In *Poetics,* tragedy is defined as "the imitation of action that is serious, complete and of a certain magnitude", and character comes only secondary to action (18). Also, this individual, understood from a modern Western framework, is not neutral. While Goldhill traces its embeddedness in Christian teleology, feminist critics like Luce Irigaray and Tina Chanter chart the role of patriarchy within this philosophy. On the other hand, Hegel's reading of history through *Antigone* alters not only post-Hegelian philosophy or modern criticism of tragedy, but also the performance history of the play. Hegel's interpretation of the play as the clash of two equally legitimate powers of social life becomes historically authoritative and sets the tone of the tragedy's modern signification. Erika Fischer-Lichte traces the effects of Hegel's recent work on the Tieck/Mendelssohn production even in 1841 and its relevance to the newly inaugurated king's idea of introducing a new era in the Prussian state (330). The binaries at work in Hegel's dialectic such as the male vs. female, divine law vs. human law, state vs. family, continue to shape modern interpretations of the play, an example of which I locate in Chapter 3 in the Irish debate over the national question vis-à-vis the tragedy of *Antigone*. Hegel's reading of the play has been authoritative in modernity to such an extent that it has become commonplace to talk about the play as a clash between two equally valid powers and as representative of the ethical and political conflicts of the day in various parts of the world.

This dawn of interest in *Antigone* that starts from German Idealism and still continues places the modern subject as a historical and political agent at the heart of its discussion of tragedy and the condition of modernity. This move is also part of a larger European project of reinventing the continent's origin in ancient Greece as the cradle of civilization and democracy. In that sense, classical tragedies become a means to culturally signify and consolidate a relationship with this origin. The fascination with *Antigone* that starts with Hegel has been

continuous in continental thought. From Hölderlin to Heidegger, Lacan to Irigaray, Žižek, Rancière, Butler, and Nussbaum[3], prominent thinkers have approached the play through its protagonist to rethink political and ethical agency. Yet, even though German Idealism and particularly Hegel set the tone for *Antigone* in modernity in terms of both ethical-political agency and national allegory, Jean Anouilh and Bertolt Brecht's versions in the context of the Second World War turned the tragedy into a resistance play, sealing the modern conceptualization of the play around the theme of political resistance against oppressive state structures.

Anouilh's *Antigone* was first performed in Paris under Nazi occupation in 1944. Since then, it has been widely received as a manifestation of French resistance, represented by Antigone, against the Nazis and the collaborationist Vichy government, represented by Creon (Fleming 167, Buis 23). During the time of its first production, the play was popular not only with the French public, but also with the collaborationist press and the Nazi occupiers whereas the French resistance press rejected the play as collaborationist and criticised Anouilh for his favourable depiction of Creon and portrayal of Antigone as an irrational, self-destructive youth (Walsh 279, Fleming 168). What distinguishes Anouilh's version is the novelty it introduces in terms of recontextualizing and rewriting the classical tragedy as a bourgeois drama set in the 20th century. In the bind of a dysfunctional bourgeois family, Antigone represents the rejection of the pragmatism and fraudulence of bourgeois conformism.

Even though Anouilh's *Antigone* has received acerbic criticism for being complicit with fascism (Fleming 181), the reception history of the play has its own history in which *Antigone* becomes a model for political resistance. Anouilh's version has had a very strong impact on many of the political adaptations written since and produced in a spirit of resistance to oppressive regimes around the globe in the 20th and 21st century, and - surprisingly - especially on those that opt for an openly left-wing or postcolonial politics from Athol Fugard's *The Island* in South Africa (1974) to Kemal Demirel's *Antigone* in Turkey (1966). As it was produced in a Nazi-occupied France, the play's reception has been a reading around political resistance to fascism. Secondly, it is through Anouilh's version that subsequent 20th century authors received *Antigone* rather than through the historically distant Sophocles. Helene Foley notes that in the United

[3] See Friedrich Hölderlin, *Hölderlin's Antigone* (1913, 2001); Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics* (1953); Jacques Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*; Luce Irigaray, *The Speculum of the Other Woman* (1985) and "Between myth and history: The tragedy of Antigone" (2010); Slavoj Žižek, *Antigone* (2016); Jacques Rancière "The Ethical Turn of Aesthetics and Politics" (2015); Judith Butler, *Antigone's Claim* (2000); and Martha Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness* (1986).

States, Sophocles' *Antigone* has never been very popular, but instead, it has been Anouilh's play that has received the attention of American audiences with its emphasis on a modern setting and the depiction of romance between Antigone and Haemon (Foley 373-374). Writing in a modern theatre tradition following Pirandello in search of their own modern tragedy, Anouilh appears to speak directly to the conflicts of his age more than the classical adapted text ever could.

Furthermore, the modern metatheatrical devices introduced by Anouilh were inspirational for 20th century playwrights. The play script underscores its quality of being "a play" played by actors on stage who act according to a cast-list drawn up for that particular production. The prologue that precedes the play serves as a modern defamiliarizing tool that invites a critical reception of the theatre piece. The omission of a conventional chorus in favour of a single person Prologue-Chorus who acts like a narrator and comments on the plot without directly engaging in the action of the play has been a repeated gesture in many of the *Antigone* adaptations in the 20th century, such as in Kemal Demirel's *Antigone*, Aidan Carl Mathews' *Antigone*, and Athol Fugard's production of Sophocles' *Antigone* in Cork, Ireland in 1999[4]. Besides, Anouilh's version had the effect of familiarizing the tragedy for modern audiences. Anouilh departed from the classical text in order to come up with a modern tragedy that speaks within the vocabulary and problematics of its own time, as well as adding modernizing touches that alter the characterization of Attic tragic protagonists and translate them into modern bourgeois figures while at the same time questioning those bourgeois values in a way more similar to the modern tragedies of Arthur Miller and Eugene O'Neill than Sophocles. When Antigone rejects the happiness of bourgeois life that is offered by Creon, saying "You disgust me, all of you, you and your happiness!" (47), she gives voice to a big "no" against Creon's pleas for compromise. Even though this makes her look irrational, she also becomes the representative of a purity unimplicated in the sovereign's discourse. In that sense, the play modernizes and rewrites the speech acts in Sophocles' tragedy, adding to its emphasis on resisting sovereign power.

Brecht's *Antigone* was first produced in Chur, Switzerland in 1948, a few years after the Second World War. The play is textually based on Hölderlin's translation with significant changes. In his version, Brecht retains the formal structure of the classical tragedy; however, he makes significant additions to modernize the main arguments of the tragedy and to include his

[4] *Antigone* (1999) accessed at http://www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk/productions/production/2855 <30 July 2019>.

own views on war, dictatorship, resistance and the politics of his day. To do this, primarily, he introduces a Prologue set in Nazi Germany in which two sisters are returning from air shelters in Berlin in 1945 to find their war deserter brother hung by the SS in front of their door. The Prologue sets the theme of the main play: Polyneices is a war deserter killed by Creon, the tyrant, who pushes his country to an unjust war in order to plunder the natural sources of Argos. Thus, the classical tragedy's theme of war and being a traitor is given a contemporary twist. Brecht sums up Sophocles' *Antigone* as "the decided rejection of tyranny in favour of democracy" (201). However, there is no right side for Brecht: Creon is a tyrant pushing his country into an unjust war; Haemon deserts the family; Antigone, being a member of the royal family, "had eaten for too long of the bread that is baked in the dark"; Tiresias is "[Creon's] tame ideologist" (199). In his 1951 notes on the adaptation, Brecht remarks that in the view of the ancients, humankind is delivered to the mercy of Fate. However, in his reworking of the play, he "has replaced the idea with the opinion that mankind's fate is mankind itself" (215-216). Therefore, Antigone's act of resistance is pushed forward by the people of Thebes, who, in the end, take their fate into their hands. For Brecht, Antigone could hardly be thought to be representative of the German proletariat, the real hero of his drama. Hence, the ending of the play is suggestive of a collective body, the German people, whom Brecht expected to rise up against fascism. This also underlines how Brecht, too, wrote a modern play for a modern audience, while at the same time radically changing the gravitational pull of the tragedy toward people's resistance. In that sense, Brecht's version is the precursor of contemporary versions in this dissertation that opt for collective resistance instead of the resistance of the singular and isolated figure of Antigone.

Brecht saw Antigone as a model for his epic theatre. Consequently, he also published the *Antigone-Model*[5] book in 1948 to provide future directors and producers a model to appreciate the methodology inherent in the work. He experimented with the form from the perspective of epic theatre through his use of the estrangement effects (*Verfremdungseffekte*) he found in classical tragedy. In the Foreword to the *Antigone-Model*, he comments that "Greek dramaturgy uses certain forms of estrangement, notably interventions by the chorus, to try and rescue some of [the] freedom of calculation" (204). According to Fischer-Lichte, "The chorus therefore appears as a foundational element for an aesthetics that aims to realize a philosophical theatre" (2018, 46). Secondly, the episodic character of ancient drama is in parallel with the Brechtian idea of breaking up the sequential narrative into a fractured one. Classical devices like the song and

[5] *Antigone-Model* was a collaborative project of Brecht with Caspar Neher, who directed the play, and Ruth Berlau, who photographed it (Brecht 210).

dance in between the dialogue scenes is closer to the Brechtian idea of montage. The epic representation with the actors showing rather than impersonating their roles marked this out as a significant theatrical event (Kuhn and Constantine, xii). The structure of classical tragedy also facilitated the preference of narration over acting out since most of the action is off-stage and narrated.

Another 20th century play that had a significant impact on later adaptations is *The Island,* the collaborative project of Athol Fugard with John Kani and Winston Ntshona in 1973 in South Africa during the apartheid era. The play is about two prisoners in an island prison, suggestive of Robben Island where many political prisoners, including Nelson Mandela, were held. In their prison cell, John and Winston rehearse a theatre piece called "The Trial and Punishment of Antigone" for their fellow prisoners and the wardens as part of the Christmas concert. The play depicts life in the prison under enforced labour and intense physical violence inflicted by the warden, Hodoshe. As John and Winston rehearse, they elaborate on life, violence, resistance, and their particular reading of their suffering through *Antigone* while raising questions about gender and humanity through metatheatrical devices.

From the start, with the experience of apartheid in the background and with the actors playing characters that have their own names, Winston and John, the play acknowledges both Kani and Ntshona as modern Antigone figures in their defiance of the apartheid state even as the play questions notions around gender, race, and individuality. Thus, beginning from its production, the play also acknowledges a reading of *Antigone* as a modern, political play. It is as though the production history of the play, as an *Antigone* story in itself, frames the whole play. Yet another layer is the play itself as the story of Winston and John rehearsing in *The Island*, which in turn frames the play-within-the-play, "The Trial and Punishment of Antigone". Sophocles' *Antigone* becomes a meta-narrative to make sense of all these other layers, and it can only reach the audience as thrice removed from its theatrical form. Sophocles' tragedy becomes the grounds for an ongoing historical dialogue between a number of texts, and the contemporary political issues of its day.

Finally, it is important to note a shift in the reception of the play toward the end of 20th century. Even though Anouilh seems to possess a privileged place for 20th century adapters of *Antigone* and Brecht's political impact is also prominent especially on left-wing theatre practitioners around the world, this situation changed toward the end of the century. From the

onset of 21st century, Sophocles, almost invariably, once again emerges as the dominant source for various adaptations and rewritings. The reasons for this might be manifold, but the renewed interest in Greek tragedy after 1969, especially to rework contemporary political problems, as detailed in *Dionysus Since 69*[6], is distinctive. Furthermore, the increased scholarly work on Greek tragedy and particularly *Antigone* at the turn of the century should also have had a significant impact. In that regard, not only all the texts analysed in this thesis are based on or claim to depart from Sophocles, but all other prominent recent versions, almost invariably refer to the ancient source. Among these, Seamus Heaney's *The Burial at Thebes* (2004), Anne Carson's *Antigone* (2015) and *Antigonick* (2012) have themselves also been produced more than once. Femi Osofisan's *Tègònni: An African Antigone* (1994) engages in an open dialogue with Sophocles' *Antigone* even though Brecht's and Anouilh's influences can still be seen. Contemporary theatrical versions by Roy Williams' *Antigone* (2014) or Lulu Raczka's *Antigone* (2020), and novel adaptations by Henry Bauchau's *Antigone* (1997), Carlo Gébler's *I, Antigone* (2021), and Nathalie Haynes' *Children of Jocasta* (2017) also testify to this turn.

ii. Postcolonial Tragedy and Counter-Discourse

Scrutinizing the discursive hegemony of the colonizer, postcolonial rewritings of *Antigone* invite subversive readings of Attic tragedy on various levels. In order to make way for a postcolonial reworking, the postcolonial author has to face the challenge of decolonizing the way tragedy is presented as a Western discourse to establish cultural hegemony. In this sense, adapting Greek tragedy, which is claimed by the West as the cultural supporting pillar of its civilization and part of its literary canon, appears to be a doomed effort. One question that constantly faces postcolonial writers is why they choose to adapt classical works from the Western canon. The answer to this question is critical because it emphasizes the postcolonial writer's relationship with the colonizer's literature. Do adaptations decolonize the classics? Can adapting 'classics' be a subversive act in itself? Or to think in Audre Lorde's famous question "Will the master's tools ever dismantle the master's house?" To overcome this impasse, playwrights such as Athol Fugard and Femi Osofisan turn to counter-discourse in which "the postcolonial writer unveils and dismantles the basic assumptions of a specific canonical text by developing a 'counter' text

[6] Edith Hall, Fiona Macintosh, and Amanda Wrigley, eds. *Dionysus Since 69: Greek Tragedy at the Dawn of the Third Millennium*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004.

that preserves many of the identifying signifiers of the original while altering, often allegorically, its structures of power" (Gilbert and Tompkins 16).

In order to question the hegemonic state of Western theatre traditions and the canonicity of a tragedy like *Antigone*, these plays introduce some metatheatrical elements into the play. The meta-theatrical elements not only have the effect of defamiliarizing the mainstream and more or less straightforward interpretations of *Antigone*, but they also expand the possibilities inherent in different readings of the play. But the use of meta-theatre functions twofold. It does not merely put the authoritative position of what is seen as the original, Western text at stake; but it also uses this text as a tool to question its own claims to validity and authority, and to show the contradictions and conflicts within the postcolonial culture or tradition of resistance itself. In this respect, by rewriting *Antigone* from the perspective of the postcolonial subject, the plays not only transform the contemporary reading of the tragedy and expand its field of possibility, but they also interrogate their own claims to subjecthood and their own uncomfortable relationship with the sovereign's discourse.

In terms of the relationship between *The Island* and *Antigone*, the use of colonial counter-discourse raises a number of discussions. The first discussion is that *The Island* does not challenge the narrative of Sophocles' *Antigone* and come up with a counter-text, and since it is not critical of the western discourse represented by the text, it cannot be considered as counter-discourse. In "Africanizing Antigone", Wumi Raji is not persuaded that "The Island is a countertext, for a countertext sets itself against an earlier one, opposing its view". Yet, according to Raji, the play has no intention of countering the questions raised by the Greek classic: "What they have done, instead, is stretch the theme of the original play further, and in such a way as to make it accommodate the context of the South African struggle against racial segregation" (149). In *Postcolonial Drama*, Gilbert and Tompkins state that "counter-discourse actively works to destabilise the power structures of the originary text rather than simply acknowledge its influence" (16). However, Astrid Van Weyenberg points out that even though Gilbert and Tomkins mention that *The Island* makes use of counter-discourse, they do not demonstrate how it destabilizes or counters the power structures of its pre-text (Weyenberg, 35). In this sense, on a textual plane, she agrees with Raji by saying that

> If ["the power-structures of the originary text"] refer to the power-structures that that *enclose* the tragic script, the structures produced by the Eurocentric tradition that has claimed Greek tragedy as the foundation of Western civilization, then *Tegonni* and *The Island* could indeed be defined as examples of canonical counter

> discourse. If, however, they refer to the power-structures *contained within* the tragic script, dramatized through the conflict between Antigone and Creon, this generates a different answer. Although Osofisan and Fugard reduce the ambiguity and change the representative value of *Antigone*'s power-structures, they do not, I repeat, set out to counter them. (36)

Therefore, Weyenberg sees counter-discourse operating at a socio-cultural level, but not at the textual level. However, Gilbert and Tompkins stress some characteristics as to why *The Island* should be seen as a counter-discourse at a textual level as well. To begin with, they underline the counter-discursive function of performance and rewriting:

> Rewriting the characters, the narrative, the context, and/or the genre of the canonical script provides another means of interrogating the cultural legacy of imperialism and offers renewed opportunities for performative intervention. These are not, however, strategies of replacement: there is no attempt to merely substitute a canonical text with its oppositional reworking. Counter-discourse seeks to deconstruct significations of authority and power exercised in the canonical text, to release its stranglehold on representation and, by implication, to intervene in social conditioning. (16)

To continue where Weyenberg leaves off, even by reducing the ambiguity in Sophocles' text and changing the representative value of Antigone's defiance, *The Island* resists Western attempts to find any positive value in Creon's discourse. This immediately reverses the concept of law, 'right', and the position of the state in relation to it. Gilbert and Tompkins go on to write that "[t]he differences between two systems of justice and the triumph of the stronger power over the weaker can easily be articulated in a colonial context" and "by extending the playing space of the Antigone story from the stage to the whole of the theatre and, beyond that, into the outside life of the actors, the play reminds us that their endeavour must always be read in the context of their location" (42). Therefore, even at a textual level, by resituating *Antigone* in a colonial context, *The Island* adopts a counter-colonial discourse from the beginning.

These works function as counter-discourse not just because they counter the discursive hegemony which lies at the heart of the tragedy, but also because they single out *Antigone* as a text within the heart of the Western Canon, not as a Western text, but as a text that counters the Western assumptions of power. Therefore, they dislocate and use *Antigone* as a counter-text to challenge the hegemonic claims of the empire. Within their prism, the classical tragedy blurs the Western binaries of inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion: Antigone, as a woman and as a rebel, is the outsider that is inside. This Antigone is no longer the devoted sister with a pure desire as represented by German Idealists, but as she is reinvented for the disenfranchised and

"strangers today (refugees, undocumented immigrants, noncitizens)"[7], she complicates and pushes against the borders of Europe and its Others, East and West, the Global South and North.

iii. Resisting Contemporary Forms of Sovereignty

According to Michel Foucault, the basic attribute of sovereignty, in the classical sense of the term, is "the right of life and death", which meant that the sovereign could "either have people put to death, or let them live, or in any case that life and death are not natural or immediate phenomena which are primal or radical, and which fall outside the field of power" (*Society Must be Defended* 240). Foucault claims that sovereignty underwent a radical shift in the 19th century, and "the right to take life and let live" was replaced by "the right to make live and let die" (241), which Foucault terms "biopolitics", a modern power regime which seeks to control and regulate "the ratio of births to deaths, the rate of reproduction, the fertility of a population and so on" (243). Through the ultimate example of the Nazi state, he also acknowledges that disciplinary power and biopower, along with the murderous power to take life and let live is functional in the modern world under fascism, but in fact this holds true for any modern capitalist state, as well (260).

In *Homo Sacer* (1998), Agamben brings together Foucault's understanding of sovereignty and biopolitics to define the political logic of modernity. Starting from Carl Schmitt's definition of sovereignty as "Sovereign is who decides on the state of exception" (11), Agamben states that the sovereign "suspends law in the state of exception" and reduces people to the status of "*homo sacer*", sacred or bare life (83), that is, a life "situated at the intersection of a capacity to be killed and yet not sacrificed, outside both human and divine law", the limits of which are expanded with modern biopolitics (73). Just like Walter Benjamin's insight that "'the state of emergency' in which we live is not the exception but the rule" ("Theses on the Philosophy of History" 257), Agamben locates modernity's continuous state of exception within the concentration camp, which becomes "the *nomos* of the political space in which we are still living" (*Homo Sacer* 166). Therefore, for Agamben, the political space of modernity is characterized by a biopolitical form of sovereignty as exemplified by the camp (174, 181).

[7] Andrés Fabián Henao Castro. "Antigone Claimed: 'I Am a Stranger!' Political Theory and the Figure of the Stranger" (2013) *Hypatia* 28 / 2.

In relation to Agamben's analysis of sovereignty and biopolitics, the various rewritings analysed in this thesis offer novel ways of questioning these concepts in their various guises in the contemporary world, which have their antecedent in Sophocles' *Antigone*, as suggested by Judith Butler, and which I offer to analyse through contemporary political theory. In Sophocles, the way Creon sends Antigone to be buried alive in a cave can be read as the sovereign's attempt to reduce her to bare life in which it is not a crime to kill her, but he also refrains from openly sacrificing her through stoning to death etc. Yet, Antigone resists Creon's attempt to rob her of her agency, and insists on appearing in the political sphere, which is one of the reasons why she has continued to fascinate those that argue for political resistance today. Butler, as discussed in detail in Chapter 1, criticises Agamben's conceptualization of bare life for disregarding the modes of agency and resistance undertaken by the disenfranchised "still within the sphere of the political, and thus not reduced to mere being, but is, more often than not, angered, indignant, rising up, and resisting" (*Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* 80). In Chapter 2, I turn to Achille Mbembe's postcolonial reading of sovereignty in *Necropolitics*, where he locates modern sovereignty within colonialism and slavery, and is a combination of "the disciplinary, the biopolitical and the necropolitical" (80) different from Agamben who associates sovereignty with the death camp. Mbembe emphasises that necropolitical sovereignty "subjugates life to the power of death" (92). Furthermore, as I argue in detail in Chapter 4, Banu Bargu develops the concept "biosovereignty" to define "the contradictory amalgamation of sovereignty and biopolitics as the distinguishing feature of contemporary power regimes" (*Starve and Immolate* 26). According to Bargu, the contemporary world is characterized by "a conjuncture in which the process of the biopoliticization of sovereignty meets the necropoliticization of resistance" (27). In the following chapters, through a discussion of Mbembe and Bargu in relation to various *Antigone* versions, I analyse how *Antigone* is taken up to make a case for epistemic resistance to such contemporary forms of sovereignty.

iv. *Antigone*s in Recent Scholarship

How Greek tragedy is rewritten and performed to represent and enact political resistance today has been the focus of classical reception studies in the recent decades. In *Dionysus Since 69*, Edith Hall locates the contemporary surge of interest in Greek drama historically in the aftermath of 1968, starting in the West and spreading around the globe. She comments that "[the reawakening of interest in Greek tragedy] was just one result of the seismic political and cultural shifts

marking the end of the 1960s. Greek tragedy began to be performed on a quantitatively far greater scale, from more radical perspectives, and in more adventurous performance styles than it had been before" (Hall et.al., *Dionysus since 69*, 1). According to Hall, the political movements that prompted this artistic orientation in the West were the anti-war movement against Vietnam, the second wave feminist movement, and the (hetero)sexual revolution of the 1968 (8-9). Similarly, Erika Fischer-Lichte traces the "boom" of Greek tragedies in Germany and links this to political, social and cultural developments in the 1970s, starting from anthropological studies on sacrificial ritual such as Girard's (329) and extending to the '68 movement, the Red Army Faction and the support it received, and the rise of a social-democrat government (332). She underlines that "Regietheater", while exploring theatre's performative, ritualistic, and political potential in that era, "sought to contemplate the origins of theatre from a historical and theoretical perspective", which "was intended to lay the foundations for, and/or justify, a new kind of theatre" (359-360). Similarly, in *Translating Words, Translating Cultures*, Lorna Hardwick maintains that "[the left-wing politically committed theatre of the 1920s and 1930s] re-emerged after the Second World War, influencing politically engaged theatre worldwide, up to and including the late twentieth-century adaptations of Greek drama and poetry" (66). Hardwick points out that especially in East Germany, the reworking of classical works was a means to circumvent state censure and voice hard-to-speak truths (64). Hence, she regards the revival of Greek tragedy after WWII as a continuation of the interventionist political theatre pioneered by Erwin Piscator and Brecht (67), which subsequently spread elsewhere in the world, such as South Africa under apartheid (76). In this vein, Hall explores the reasons for the renewed interest in Greek tragedy under four categories: social (sexual liberation of the 60s (10)), political (as in the protest movements of 60s and 70s) (9), theatrical (with increased emphasis on performance, i.e., Performative Turn in theatre), and cerebral (post-structuralism (40-41, linguistic turn in the academy (38), widespread use of psychoanalysis and therapy (36)). Hall argues that the subject matter of Greek tragedies provided a fertile ground for these developments to be worked through (22), and consequently tragedy, more than ever before, has become "particularly special to our specific moment in human history" (4).

Margaret Laera, on the other hand, disagrees with classicists like Hall, Fischer-Lichte and Hardwick who argue that it is the rich symbolism and subject matter of classical tragedy that enable contemporary political interpretations, and therefore make them relevant in the contemporary world. While Laera agrees that Greek tragedy is rich in symbolism and subject matter, she finds the roots of this renewed interest in tragedy in the "mythologies around

classical Athens" in the Western imaginary in post-50s Europe. According to Laera, the wish to re-evoke classical tragedy is more related to the European desire for self-definition as an inheritor of ancient Greece than it is to the themes and poetics of classical tragedy. She comments that the reasons for these revivals "are to be found in the current ideological system, liberal capitalism, and its allegiance with democracy" as "[t]heir 'classical' status offers contemporary Europeans a reassuring way to achieve self-definition and affirm themselves on the global stage, but the single most important factor is the association of tragedy with democracy in Athens" (43).

Fischer-Lichte's emphasis on theatre's search for origins in Greek tragedy also supports Laera's notion of European self-definition through these works. Additionally, I would add that the turn to Attic tragedies in the second half of the 20th century also means to situate oneself historically and ideologically. Yet, for the theatre avant-garde of the 60s and 70s, this turn is also a means to break away from modernity in the search for a pre-modern embodied experience. Dionysus becomes more of a symbol to explore the limits of the human and the performative potential of theatre. Politically, this simultaneously means a rejection of Enlightenment values around rationalism which supports the political status quo in favour of a radical politics of activism. In that sense, these theatres also turn toward the subversive potential that they find within Attic tragedies even as they are historically embedded at the heart of the Athenian civic experience. The moral ambiguity and political open-endedness of Attic tragedies supply 20th century theatre makers and thinkers with tools to rethink the sovereign subject and the politics surrounding this idea of agency. Therefore, not only has there been a boom in the reworkings of Attic tragedies since 1970s, but there has also been a surge of scholarship around their performative and political implications.

Within this renewed interest in Greek tragedy from a contemporary political perspective, Sophocles' *Antigone* seems to have a privileged place. In *Antigone on the Contemporary World Stage*, Mee and Foley point out that *Antigone* is "perhaps the only play, classical or modern, to have been reproduced all over the world, … [having] inspired many culturally specific rewritings" (1). Indeed, many examples in Mee and Foley's edited volume show that the play has had a special political meaning for modernity in search of a unique voice and agency to defy the state. The figure of Antigone in Sophocles' tragedy has increasingly become the embodiment of refusal and defiant questioning in the face of contemporary forms of sovereignty. As Antigone insists on her right to mourn publicly, bury her brother, and speak up against Creon, she also becomes an

emblematic political figure in defiance of state power and in speaking truth to power. Antigone's political force becomes so emblematic that in *The Returns of Antigone*, Tina Chanter and Sean Kirkland comment that Antigone lives on beyond her historical and canonical specifications, and "her voice is activated in precise political configurations that call forth her demise, bringing her to life whenever a political crisis emerges that is premised upon the articulation of some form of exclusion that the very form of a state renders inarticulable" (6). Moreover, they emphasize Antigone's ongoing subversive role extending toward the future in their work, which is "inspired by the figure of Antigone, generative of new Antigones, Antigones to come" (19). From this perspective, Chanter and Kirkland seem to be more interested in the figure of Antigone and her political action than Sophocles' tragedy, which is suggestive of a continuity in Western thought and scholarship on *Antigone*.

Starting from George Steiner's seminal work, *Antigones* (1984), subtitled "How the Antigone legend has endured in Western literature, art, and thought", the tendency has been to focus on the reception of *Antigone* in the West throughout modernity and especially in theory in terms of Hegelian and post-Hegelian thought. Steiner's work is the first and most extensive survey into how *Antigone* figures in Western thought and theatre. After Steiner, monographs and edited volumes published since 2010 are still predominantly interested in responding to *Antigone*'s political and philosophical impact in Western thought. Two works that are central to this thesis, Judith Butler's *Antigone's Claim* (2000) and Bonnie Honig's *Antigone, Interrupted* (2013) both take up *Antigone* in political theory from a feminist perspective and make a case for a performative politics of resistance. Following Lacan's influential seminar on *Antigone* in *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, critics have also approached *Antigone* from a psychoanalytical perspective. For example, in *The Antigone Complex: Ethics and the Invention of Feminine Desire* (2004), Cecilia Sjöholm questions the ethics of *Antigone* through a reading of the heroine's desire. There has also been a turn to postcolonial and Global South adaptations in search of a contemporary politics of *Antigone*. Tina Chanter, in *Whose Antigones? The Tragic Marginalization of Slavery* (2011) reads *Antigone* via the problem of race and scrutinizes Hegel's ethics. She revisits the African versions by Fugard and Osofisan to scrutinize the specific configurations in which *Antigone* is reborn. More recently, in *Antigone in the Americas: Democracy, Sexuality, and Death in the Settler Colonial Present* (2021), Andrés Fabián Henao Castro reads *Antigone* via Latin American adaptations as well as historico-political works to question the limits of social intelligibility in neocolonial postmodernity.

The majority of edited volumes concentrate on the philosophical and political impacts of *Antigone* in modernity. They are rarely interested in theatrical adaptations, and when they are, it is generally to discuss postcolonial rewritings. In the Introduction to *Feminist Readings of Antigone* (2010), Fanny Söderbäck describes the book's focus on "feminist engagements with this enigmatic figure" of Antigone (2), and the essays in the book are majorly interested in a feminist response to Antigone's reception in Western philosophy and psychoanalysis. *Interrogating Antigone in Postmodern Philosophy and Criticism* concentrates on philosophy, politics, psychoanalysis, and feminist theory; however, the book devotes a final section to translations, adaptations, and performance with examples from Germany, Argentina, Nigeria, and Ireland. Published in the same year, Mee and Foley's *Antigone on the Contemporary World Stage* (2011) is the only edited volume on *Antigone* that concentrates on the performative, dramaturgical and theatrical dimensions of the play as it is reworked around the globe. Since then, the analysis of *Antigone* adaptations within certain contexts especially in locations with marked histories of oppression, has come to the forefront. Moira Fradinger's work on Argentine *Antigone*s has recently culminated in a monograph on Latin America, *Antigonas* (2023). Similarly, *Portrayals of Antigone in Portugal* (2017), edited by Carlos Morais, Lorna Hardwick and Maria de Fáima Silva, traces Portuguese and Brazilian adaptations. Fiona Macintosh's essay "Irish Antigone and Burying the Dead", exploring the tradition of reworking Antigone in Ireland has been further developed by doctoral dissertations such as Anastasia Remoundou Howley's *Palimpsests of Antigone: Contemporary Irish Versions of Greek Tragedy* (2010) and Aikaterini Gotsi's *Irish Antigones* (2012) as well as Stephen Wilmer's chapter on "Performing Antigone in the Twenty-First Century" in Interrogating *Antigone*[8]. Finally, African *Antigones*, especially Fugard and Osofisan's versions, have been central to various postcolonial readings, such as Barbara Goff and Michael Simpson's seminal work, *Crossroads in the Black Aegean* (2007), Lorna Hardwick's *Classics in Postcolonial Worlds* (2007), Astrid Van Weyenberg's *The Politics of Adaptation* (2013), and Tina Chanter's *Whose Antigone? The Tragic Marginalization of Slavery* (2011).

In their Introduction, Mee and Foley define their central question as "What happens to a single play in a wide variety of contexts: why and how it is mobilized, what issues has it been used to address, what does it do, and, finally, what do these numerous re-visions reveal about the play itself and the cultures and historical moments in which it is performed?" (1). Indeed, the various adaptations and performances covered in the book demonstrate that Antigone has been

[8] In a wider context, Irish adaptation of Greek tragedies, including *Antigone*, has also been the focus of *Rebel Women: Staging Ancient Greek Drama Today* (2005), edited by John Dillon and S.E. Wilmer, and *Amid Our Troubles: Irish Versions of Greek Tragedy* (2002), edited by Marianne McDonald and J. Michael Walton.

mobilized in performance around the globe to reflect a diverse array of political issues, conflicts, and people's resistances beyond the play's Western conceptualization. However, neither Mee and Foley nor the thematically linked monographs above address the question "Why?" to scrutinize whether there is a common characteristic that links these reworkings so that the "ubiquity" (6) of *Antigone* is seen in a new light. As the scholarship goes, *Antigone* is thus read as a play that allows for the expression of various forms of political resistance around the world in divergent forms. However, it is often overlooked how certain qualities of the tragedy relate to contemporary political conflicts in a special way that marks this moment in history and links these various resistances globally. Therefore, different from them, this dissertation aims to press this question: *How and why* do people in various zones of crisis embrace, interpret and adapt *Antigone* to make sense of those varying problems and reflect their political resistance? Are there some common characteristics that are relevant for the variety of adaptations in the contemporary world? Is there a source text, i.e., Sophocles' *Antigone* or is the play received through various modern versions? Some obvious themes that relate to Antigone's resistant quality today are wars and especially civil wars, the unburied dead and the right to mourn, the condition of possibility for resistance within an uneven distribution of power, fake news and post-truth, injustices, defiance of hegemonic state structures, and speaking truth to power. What my research adds to this variety of themes is that there is a unifying link that comes to the forefront toward the end of the 20th and beginning of 21st centuries. I argue that because of the epistemic quality that becomes prominent in the political appropriations of *Antigone*, there is a historical shift in what the play comes to represent, i.e., epistemic resistance.

v. Epistemic Violence and Epistemic Resistance

Contemporary versions of *Antigone* that focus on the discursive and performative ways resistance and/or rebellion take place in the play advocate for political change primarily through an epistemic form of resistance, the recognition of peoples or individuals in their agency as knowers and seekers of alternative truths, for which the classical text provides a means. As early as the 1980s, Gayatri Spivak mobilized the term "epistemic violence" for subaltern studies to discuss how subaltern persons, and more particularly women, are muted by the discursive field of imperialism which locates the sovereign S/subject in the West through the Othering of the

unnamed colonial subjects[9]. In "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988), Spivak makes the famous / notorious point that there is no discursive space for the subaltern to be heard or read (*Can the Subaltern Speak* 282), and therefore "[t]he subaltern cannot speak" (283). She arrives at this conclusion through a discussion around the narrativization of "the burning of *sati*", i.e., widow self-immolation rites in India and its prohibition by colonial powers, at the end of which she gives the example of the performative act she finds in the act of suicide by a young woman named Bhuvaneswari Bhaduri (281-282). Even though at the time of the suicide, nobody knew the real motives of the young woman, Bhuvaneswari had waited for her menstruation to rule out the likely assumption that she had committed suicide to escape an illicit pregnancy. Spivak read Bhuvaneswari's act as "the subaltern rewriting of the social text of *sati*-suicide in an interventionist way", where the young woman performatively refused to be contained "within legitimate passion by a single male" through "the physiological inscription of her body" (282). According to Spivak's account, it was found out years later that Bhuvaneswari was in fact involved in the armed resistance for Indian independence, and she was entrusted with an assassination. When she fell short of carrying out the task, she committed suicide. However, when Spivak first inquired, her family still brushed off the inexplicable suicide saying, "it was a case of illicit love". For that reason, Spivak concluded that "[t]he subaltern as female cannot be heard or read" (282), and "[t]he subaltern cannot speak" (283).

After subsequent criticism from postcolonial and Black feminist scholars, such as Abena P. A. Busia, Spivak altered her views in the revised edition of her article first published in 1999. In "Silencing Sycorax", Busia protests that Spivak's conclusion "can [only] be reached if, as she demonstrates, you continue to look for the native woman's voice in the master's texts or the master interpretations of such texts; such works are arranged to demonstrate the many ways in which the native woman cannot speak" (102). Instead, she proposes to hear and read the non-normative ways women render their own texts legible. On Bhuvaneswari's case, Busia wrote that "the body is invested with meaning by the woman and is left as a text. Far from being unable to be read, Spivak herself gives us a reading by accepting the body as a legitimate text which can be used to inscribe itself out of multiple conscriptions" (103). Spivak herself also disclosed some new facts in her revised article. Firstly, Bhuvaneswari had left a letter to her sister explaining the reasons of her suicide (*Can the Subaltern Speak* 63). Also, she was not "a 'true' subaltern" as a middle-class woman (64). In this version, Spivak withdrew her claim that the subaltern cannot

[9] The term "epistemic violence" is discussed in two articles by Spivak in the 1980s: "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism" (1985) and "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988).

speak, admitting that "[i]t was an unadvisable remark" (63), but she retained that "The subaltern as female cannot be heard or read" (63) since the subaltern, by definition, was "on the other side of difference, or an epistemic fracture" (64).

Actually, Spivak herself had previously argued more favourably on the epistemic resistance of subaltern women in her article on her translation of "Draupadi" by Mahasveta Devi, published in 1981. In the story, Dopdi Mehjen, or Draupadi, a militant woman in the Bengali tribal uprising, is captured by government soldiers, gang raped, and tortured with the intention of extracting information from her. However, instead of being humiliated, Dopdi rises up, refuses to put on her clothes, and confronts Officer Senanayak. She is terribly wounded, with her breasts torn and vagina bleeding, yet she spits and laughs at the officer's face. She says, "There isn't a man here that I should be ashamed. I will not let you put my cloth on me. What more can you do? Come on, counter me-come on, counter me-?" (Spivak, "Draupadi" 402). Spivak draws attention to her use of the English word in a subversive way:

> [Dopdi] is the only one who uses the word "counter" […] an abbreviation for "killed by police in an encounter," the code description for death by police torture. Dopdi does not understand English, but she understands this formula and the word. In her use of it at the end, it comes mysteriously close to the "proper" English usage. It is the menacing appeal of the objectified subject to its politico-sexual enemy-the provisionally silenced master of the subject-object dialectic-to encounter-"counter"-her. What is it to "use" a language "correctly" without "knowing" it? (391)

Even though Draupadi does not speak English, she uses the word "counter" in a way that signals multiple layers of meaning. While on one hand, she defiantly stands up to the officer and asks him to kill her, which is the most he could do in her regard; on the other hand, she also "counters" him in the sense of both confronting / encountering and opposing / challenging him. At the same time, Senanayak, who previously tries to decipher her ululations but fails, is shocked, frightened, and still unable to understand her. However, Draupadi is victorious. Her song that Senanayak unsuccessfully tries to decipher remains opaque, just like the names of her comrades she does not disclose, and in that sense, Mahasveta Devi refuses to render the tribal woman transparent to the male gaze. Draupadi resists being translated into Senanayak's patriarchal discourse. Yet, her political resistance prevails epistemically. Even though there is no epistemic space for her to be heard or read, as Spivak claims, and she is torn and wounded, she is still able to pass her message of resistance and defiance to the other side, a message part of which is her indecipherability.

In the light of Draupadi's example, it is crucial to note that even though Bhuvaneswari had no discursive space to be read or heard, she still managed to make an intervention through her act. Both Bhuvaneswari and Draupadi had already made their intervention through their political acts even before their final acts. Spivak's example of Bhuvaneswari is open to being read as a reflection on the subversive potential of performative acts of dissent and on epistemic resistance. In that sense, if epistemic violence in Spivak's terminology is the constant rendering mute of the subaltern, there is also the possibility for a politics to transcend this subaltern position, thereby also opening up a discursive space in philosophy and epistemology for such resistant subjectivities to emerge. Where there are epistemic violence and fractures that leave the Other at the wrong side of the divide, there are also subversive methods to counter this violence and assert epistemic resistance. *Antigone* versions analysed in this dissertation demonstrate various ways in which the canonical text can be a means for such resistance.

Bhuvaneswari's performative intervention in her act of suicide is also resonant with Antigone's self-destruction, which is also open to interpretation as another act of resistance to being contained within matrimony. The meaning of Antigone's name suggesting being anti-generational (Butler, *Antigone's Claim* 22), as well as her being the child of an incestuous marriage, can be read as signs that Antigone breaks this intergenerational curse by ending her life and stopping its spread to the next generation. Besides Antigone's resistance to Creon, there is also this element of the symbolic act of epistemic resistance in Antigone's refusal of matrimony or the norms of the patriarchal family, which stands in close proximity to Bhuvaneswari's subversive act as framed by Spivak. Arguably, the subversive nature of Antigone's refusal is so strong that even Sophocles could not resist the temptation to have Haemon claim Antigone as his bride even after her death. Bonnie Honig comments that Antigone is "reappropriated for the conjugal family she rejected in life when Haemon, finding her dead, kills himself to marry her in an iconic marriage to death" (130). In the messenger's depiction of the scene to Eurydice, Haemon is portrayed as not only embracing Antigone, but also having his blood spurt out on Antigone's cheek, as if metaphorically marking her, and claiming her in a way also suggestive of male ejaculation. The scene makes the Messenger comment "And there he lies, body enfolding body… / he has won his bride at last, poor boy, / not here but in the houses of the dead"[10] (Sophocles, Fagles, ll. 1369-1371). But it does not end there. Upon hearing this, as Eurydice

[10] "κεῖται δὲ νεκρὸς περὶ νεκρῷ, τὰ νυμφικὰ
τέλη λαχὼν δείλαιος ἔν γ' Ἄιδου δόμοις," (He lay, a corpse holding a corpse, having achieved his marriage rites, poor fellow, in the house of Hades) (ll. 1240-1241)

enters the palace without saying a word, the Chorus gets worried. Yet, the Messenger reassures: "but here's my hope—faced with her son's death / she finds it unbecoming to mourn in public"[11] (ll. 1376-1377). Eurydice's suicide, of course, proves the opposite. Just as Antigone refuses being contained in matrimony and insists on public mourning, Eurydice, too, joins her in this act. Even though she remains muted, like Bhuvaneswari, and even if "the subaltern as female cannot be heard or read" (Spivak 282), her death symbolizes not only the excessiveness of her grief, its refusal to be hushed or contained, but also her refusal to accept Creon and her place within her marriage to him. In Honig's terminology, she also "prioritizes the natal bonds over the conjugal" (132). Like Bhuvaneswari, Eurydice's act, as well as Antigone's, becomes "an interventionist way" to rewrite the social text of good wifehood (Spivak 282). In this sense, Sophocles' version offers a fertile ground to discuss the epistemic resistance that both Antigone's and Eurydice's actions put forward regarding gender and kinship. However, in the new versions of the play, even more possibilities toward epistemic resistance are explored. For instance, in Şahika Tekand's *Eurydice's Cry*, it is not solely Antigone and Eurydice's suicides, but even more so Eurydice's framing of her own suicide that inclines toward Spivak's reading of Bhuvaneswari's act. As Eurydice assumes a voice in Tekand, she both embodies resistance of the social text of good wifehood in her subversive act, and she transcends her subalternity by ending her silence and assuming a voice. Likewise, in Colm Tóibín's *The Pale Sister*, Ismene not only shows a willingness to stand in solidarity with her sister, but she also develops her own voice and her own narrative, overthrowing two thousand years of silence and forgetting, and resisting the epistemic violence she is faced with.

In Miranda Fricker's *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*, an injustice of a distinctively epistemic quality occurs when a wrong is done to someone specifically in their capacity as a knower. Fricker distinguishes between two forms of epistemic injustice, testimonial and hermeneutical:

> Testimonial injustice occurs when prejudice causes a hearer to give a deflated level of credibility to a speaker's word; hermeneutical injustice occurs at a prior stage, when a gap in collective interpretive resources puts someone at an unfair disadvantage when it comes to making sense of their social experiences. An example of the first might be that the police do not believe you because you are black; an example of the second might be that you suffer sexual harassment in a culture that still lacks that critical concept. We might say that testimonial injustice is caused by prejudice in the economy of credibility; and that hermeneutical

[11] ἐλπίσιν δὲ βόσκομαι
ἄχη τέκνου κλυοῦσαν ἐς πόλιν γόου
οὐκ ἀξιώσειν, ἀλλ᾽ ὑπὸ στέγης ἔσω (but I am sustained by hope that after hearing of the sorrows of her son she will not demand a lamentation in the city) (ll. 1246-1248)

> injustice is caused by structural prejudice in the economy of the collective hermeneutical resources. (1)

Nowhere in the philosophical work on epistemic injustice is Sophocles' *Antigone* ever evoked. However, the play is a rich source to illustrate Fricker's point. Creon, as the sovereign, is the perpetrator of testimonial injustice every time he refuses to take others at their word. He does not spare anyone. Antigone and Ismene suffer from what Fricker terms a "credibility deficit" (17) when Creon does not believe them. His disbelief is based on their identity, and he hastily decides that the sisters acted in collaboration. Similarly, he challenges both Tiresias' and the Sentry's testimonies by accusing them of bribery. He does not believe Haemon who cautions him about the public opinion, and he discredits his testimony because he thinks Haemon is possessed by love. Yet, the bigger injustice occurs at the hermeneutical level, which is conditioned by the political and becomes the focal point in adaptations. There is no epistemic field for women and those who are deprived of power to make sense or be heard at all. Yet, in contrast to Sophocles who characteristically leaves more space to ambiguity and a multiplicity of meanings, the modern versions of *Antigone* come up with a more clear-cut agenda in associating the figure of Antigone with political struggle. The versions that employ epistemic resistance, which I find characteristic for the contemporary period, interrogate the power mechanisms and discursive fields that render certain persons mute, unintelligible, or even hostile. For instance, in *Home Fire*, Kamila Shamsie starts with the testimonial injustice that Muslim British face when travelling internationally after 9/11 and demonstrates how there is no discursive space for Aneeka (the Antigone figure of the novel) to be heard at all. Like Bhuvaneswari, she ends up resisting this epistemic violence through a staged performance of her grief if not her death.

In defining epistemic injustice, Fricker links the injury caused by such injustice to prejudice. Whereas testimonial injustice introduces prejudice at the individual level, hermeneutical prejudice is caused by a structural inequality within a social context. This not only takes individual culpability off the table, but it also takes for granted that there was initially an epistemic ground for the oppressed subject to inhabit and make sense within, but that it was subsequently erased as a result of prejudice. Even though Fricker takes into consideration the politics of social power which regulates the production of reason and knowledge in a certain context, this does not necessarily cause her to conclude that such meaning production practices are instigated only through the exclusion of certain others and their narratives for this social power to operate. This occludes the importance of political change and Fricker ends up essentializing and prioritizing ethics over politics. In discussing the limits of what can be

achieved at the level of individuals, Fricker emphasizes that "the root cause of epistemic injustice is structures of unequal power and the systematic prejudices that they generate. Eradicating these injustices would ultimately take not just more virtuous hearers, but collective social political change—in matters of epistemic injustice, the ethical is political" (7-8). However, for Fricker, who works within the field of ethics, epistemic injustice is fundamentally an ethical issue, and therefore should be explored as such. Consequently, she claims that "the political depends upon the ethical" (8), without offering any further clarification on this point. I think there is a basic contradiction in claiming that the cause of epistemic injustice, which is an ethical issue, is political and then concluding that the political depends on the ethical. In contrast to Fricker's prioritization of the ethical, Spivak's approach demonstrates how the epistemological and the ethical are conditioned by politics within the postcolonial context. For Spivak, the issue is not the ethical problematics of silencing the subaltern, but to deconstruct the mechanisms of power that necessitate the constant silencing and Othering of colonial subjectivities and confining certain populations within subaltern positions, which is an integral element in the constitution of the Western subject.

The discussion of epistemic injustice in the double bind of ethics and politics is also historically relevant to discussions around *Antigone* for very similar reasons. Hegel's association of Antigone with ethical life and Lacan's reading of *Antigone* in terms of the ethics of psychoanalysis have been at the centre of the feminist critique of not only Butler and Honig, but also many others among whom Luce Irigaray, Tina Chanter, Miriam Leonard, Cecilia Sjöholm and Mary Beth Mader[12] are prominent. What the feminist critique brought to the table in interpreting Antigone is the rejection of confining Antigone to the pre-political space of ethics, criticising Hegel and Lacan for failing to hear Antigone's voice and politics, consequently denying her political agency at all. As I set out to demonstrate in Chapter 1, this politicisation occurs not through a revaluation of Antigone's deed, but through a discussion of how Antigone frames her deed, thus opening up an epistemic space for Antigone's speech acts. This discussion, in my view, also mirrors the redemption of the concept "epistemic injustice" from the confines of ethics, through an entry into politics. If, as Fricker says, it is less a matter of individual virtues

[12] See Luce Irigaray, *The Speculum of the Other Woman* (G. C. Gill, Trans.) Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985; Tina Chanter, *Whose Antigone? The Tragic Marginalization of Slavery.* Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011; Miriam Leonard, "Lacan, Irigaray, and Beyond: Antigones and the politics of psychoanalysis", in V. Zajko & M. Leonard (Eds.), *Laughing with Medusa: Classical Myth and Feminist Thought* (pp. 121-139). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006; Cecilia Sjöholm *The Antigone Complex: Ethics and the Invention of Feminine Desire.* Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2004; and Mary Beth Mader, "Antigone's Line" *Bulletin de la Société Americain de Philosophie de Langue Française* 14/2, Fall 2005.

than changing the unequal power structures, then there should also be a political solution to this political problem.

Departing from and building on Fricker's theory, José Medina, in *The Epistemology of Resistance*, criticises the primacy of the ethical over the political in Fricker, and draws attention to the political harms that both precede and follow epistemic interactions:

> We have here a *political dysfunction* within which the epistemic and the ethical dysfunctions have to be located and understood, since the latter result from (while at the same time feeding into) the former. I agree with Fricker that in unfairly biased credibility assessments there is a "dual epistemic and ethical dysfunction" (p. 17). But both of them are in fact grounded in, facilitated by, and sustained by a political dysfunction. (88)

The political approach endorsed by Medina here brings about a perspective toward resistance to epistemic injustices and change, which culminates in his understanding of epistemic resistance defined as

> Epistemic injustices (such as unequal access to and participation in knowledge practices, vitiated testimonial dynamics, phenomena of hermeneutical marginalization, to name some central ones) call for epistemic resistance [;] that is, for the use of our epistemic resources and abilities to undermine and change oppressive normative structures and the complacent cognitive-affective functioning that sustains those structures. (3)

However, for Medina, resistance is not just a strategy to counter epistemic injustices, but it is by and large an epistemic model of democracy (6). In this framework, epistemic friction is the first requirement for democratic interaction. He takes off from Wittgenstein's "We want to walk: so we need *friction*. Back to the rough ground!" (3, 48) to emphasize that a society needs epistemic friction, in the form of resistance, in order to achieve democracy at all. So, instead of a consensus model involving practices designed to create and sustain agreement within a community, such as voting, he opts for a resistance model, which gives dissent and contestation central roles in order to promote diversity, interaction, and dynamism within a community (4-6).

Secondly, Medina defines his epistemological framework as "a *performative* and *pragmatist* one", where "knowing is mainly a matter of doing, that is, of engaging in epistemic actions and participating in epistemic practices" (52). In this sense, Medina proposes an epistemic praxis that goes beyond the confines of discourse; one that is not simply discursive, but also performative, which also does something by saying. Thirdly, Medina also calls for political activism and resistance, which "in changing the social standing of subjects can change epistemic attitudes and

habits of social perception". Therefore, for him, actions and practices are as vital as words and discourses to realize deep epistemic transformations and counter epistemic injustices (234). Even though Medina does not write about *Antigone*, I find his conceptualization of epistemic resistance relevant to contemporary discussions of the tragedy. In that sense, Medina's performative understanding of epistemology both closely approximates Butler's in discussing the performative aspect of Antigone's speech acts and it also feeds into the contemporary rewritings of *Antigone* which take up the dynamics of resistance within the play from an epistemological point of view. With a mind to epistemic resistance, not only the central conflict within the play is reimagined, but also Antigone's resistance is seen as part of a larger project to resist sovereign power and state oppression.

For Medina, resistance can be positive or negative, internal or external, and beneficial or detrimental. He distinguishes between resistance as epistemic vice and as epistemic virtue. On the one hand, epistemic vices are structural and systematic attitudes and dispositions that get in the way of knowledge, such as epistemic ignorance in the form of arrogance, i.e., thinking of oneself as cognitively superior and not learning from others' experiences and standpoints (30-31), epistemic laziness i.e., lack of curiosity and having the privilege of not knowing, not needing to know (32-33); or closed-mindedness i.e., needing not to know other's epistemic perspectives (34). Epistemic vices are not unconditionally associated with those that are in a position of power, even though structurally they are more prone to it because of the cognitive authority and credibility excess that they enjoy. On the other hand, epistemic virtues facilitate the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge (30). These are also the mirror opposites of the vices aforementioned and demonstrate epistemic lucidity in the form of humility i.e., being attentive to one's cognitive limitations; curiosity/diligence i.e., having a motivation to fill in their cognitive gaps; and open mindedness i.e., feeling the need to be more attentive to the perspectives of others (42-44).

In thinking about *Antigone* through Medina's framework of epistemic resistance, the distinction between epistemic vices and virtues is not as straightforward as it looks at first sight. To begin with, it seems self-evident to regard Creon, the sovereign, as the privileged subject in a position of power and as displaying various epistemic vices, from arrogance to closed-mindedness. As the metaphor around Tiresias' blindness also suggests, Creon is the real blind one who cannot truly see the dimensions of the catastrophe he is bringing in with his lack of understanding. Creon's epistemic insensitivity reaches what Medina terms "meta-blindness", that

is, he is blind to his own blindness to such an extent that he cannot understand the limits of his own horizon of understanding (Medina 75). However, in contrast to Creon's epistemic vices, is Antigone a paragon of epistemic virtue? Does Antigone demonstrate lucidity, humility, curiosity and open-mindedness at all? On the contrary, she is as arrogant and closed-minded as her opponent. She refuses to hear and immediately condemns both the Chorus and Ismene when they come up with different views than her own. Moreover, she has an unshakable belief in the sole righteousness of her own stance. In that sense, she is as closed to epistemic friction as Creon is. It is this quality of Antigone, her lack of compromise or negotiation that comes across as her singularity, her death-bent character, or her inability to organise for political resistance. This is also one of the reasons why Ismene has been held up as a better example by many including Slavoj Žižek, who comments: "the figure with which we can identify is her sister Ismene – kind, considerate, sensitive, prepared to give way and compromise" (Žižek, *Antigone* 131). Yet can Ismene be a model for epistemic virtue? Let us consider that the reason why she refuses to participate in Antigone's plan is her internalized subjugation that she gives voice to:

> […] Remember we are women,
> we're not born to contend with men. Then too,
> we're underlings, ruled by much stronger hands,
> so we must submit in this, and things still worse[13]
> (Sophocles, Fagles ll. 74-77)

Ismene here displays what Medina terms "the epistemic vices of the oppressed", having internalized her oppressors' judgements and expectations of herself. Therefore, neither is she a good model for epistemic virtue, and besides, she is not able to resist at all. Alternatively, not only the Chorus, but also figures like Haemon and Tiresias demonstrate both an openness toward learning from others' perspective and humility. For instance, Haemon, in his *agon* with his father, is not only very modest in regard to his own positionality, but he also expresses the public opinion, which he is capable of opening himself up to, as well as cautioning his father against epistemic arrogance by saying "Whoever thinks that he alone possesses intelligence / the gift of eloquence, he and no one else, / and character too . . . such men, I tell you / spread them open, you will find them empty"[14] (ll. 791,794). To complicate matters more, even Creon, in the end,

---

[13] 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.
(Why, we must remember that we are women, who cannot fight against men, and then that we are ruled by those whose power is greater, so that we must consent to this and to other things even more painful!) (ll. 61-64)

[14] ὅστις γὰρ αὐτὸς ἢ φρονεῖν μόνος δοκεῖ,

although it is too late, is able to take council, open himself to the epistemic field of the other, thereby demonstrating some epistemic virtue.

This complication of the epistemic resistance within the tragedy is not contradictory, but the nuances inherent in Sophocles' play actually align with the possibilities within the notion of epistemic resistance. This is what Medina terms "a kaleidoscopic consciousness rather than a merely dual one" (44), the ability to engage in new perspectives through epistemic counterpoints. Overall, it is the play itself that is able to exemplify instances of epistemic friction and the consequences when epistemic friction is denied in favour of sovereignty. In the end, the figure of Antigone stands out as the one who resists, both politically and epistemically, in spite of all epistemic vices and virtues coexisting in her characterization. Not only Antigone's deed of burial, but also her speech acts, as powerfully argued by Butler stand in stark opposition to those of Creon, subverting and defeating him especially when he is even denying Antigone's capacity to resist. In Medina's terminology, I contend that Antigone becomes an "epistemic hero", an emblem for resistance, an "extraordinary [subject] who under conditions of epistemic oppression [is] able to develop epistemic virtues with a tremendous transformative potential" (186). But what are Antigone's virtues if not humility, open-mindedness and curiosity? It is primarily Antigone's epistemic lucidity at work. Since she is in the oppressed position in the power struggle, she embodies "the alternative cognitive perspectives of marginalized subjects" (Medina 45), or in other words, the alternative epistemology to that of the sovereign. Her lucidity has a subversive character, with a potential to question, counter, and change the hegemonic view. Different from Ismene, she can cultivate "a consciousness from elsewhere" (200). Therefore, she emerges as an epistemic hero, who "epitomize[s] the daily struggles of resistance of ordinary people", and also "the transformative impact of performance that we consider *heroic* is crucially dependent on networks and daily practices that *echo* that performance" (187). Antigone's dissent has an echoable quality as her dying act gets repeated by Haemon and Eurydice in Sophocles' play.

According to Medina, for an act of epistemic resistance to lead to social change, it must be echoable, i.e., become part of a performative chain of resistance with transformative potential. I argue that this echoability is a phenomenon that gets reinvented in the rewritings of *Antigone*. In

---

ἢ γλῶσσαν, ἢν οὐκ ἄλλος, ἢ ψυχὴν ἔχειν,
οὗτοι διαπτυχθέντες ὤφθησαν κενοί.
(For whoever think that they themselves alone have sense, or have a power of speech or an intelligence that no other has, these people when they are laid open are found to be empty.) (ll. 707-709)

the works I am analysing, the echoability of Antigone's resistance finds expression not only in the other characters that she subsumes and the Chorus, but also in the very act of evoking *Antigone* for adaptation. Throughout the dissertation, I refer to concepts within Medina's framework in order to discuss the various aspects of epistemic injustices and resistances in the contemporary rewritings of *Antigone*; however, as demonstrated here, Sophocles' text also displays many of these aspects that are of interest to Medina, which is also a reason why people in various zones of political crisis have taken up the work as if it were an archetype for epistemic resistance. Just as Medina constantly refers to the importance of "resistant imaginations" to be able to counter epistemic injustices, the desire to re-imagine *Antigone*, too, proves to be such.

However, I would still like to nuance Medina's approach toward performativity in terms of epistemic resistance through Judith Butler's conceptualization of the term. In Medina, the act of epistemic resistance is agential or more subject-centred; that is, it gets to be initiated and performed by subjects and it is dependent on their certain qualities qua subjects, such as in relation to their various epistemic virtues and vices. However, for Butler, performativity is something that works through a subject and denotes a decentring of the subject. Although Butler's understanding of performativity will be discussed at length in Chapter 1 in relation to *Antigone's Claim*; for the purposes here, it is still important to note some of its aspects. In *Bodies That Matter*, Butler elaborates how it is the act that makes the subject instead of the pre-existing subject doing the act: "there is no 'I' who stands *behind* discourse and executes its volition or will through discourse. On the contrary, the 'I' only comes into being through being called, named, interpellated, to use the Althusserian term, and this discursive constitution takes place prior to the 'I'" (171). In the interpellation of the subject by the discourse, what gets to be invented is the subversion of the established meaning through performed repetition. Also, Butler distinguishes between performance and performativity in the sense that "the latter consists in a reiteration of norms which precede, constrain, and exceed the performer and in that sense cannot be taken as the fabrication of the performer's 'will' or 'choice'; remains opaque, unconscious, unperformable" (178). To return to the example of the figure of Antigone, from Butler's understanding of performativity, Antigone does not perform at will, language performs through her, interpellating her. Therefore, unlike Medina's conceptualization of epistemic resistance through certain qualities of subjects, the subject is in the process of becoming with the performative act. Therefore, it is not an intrinsic quality of Antigone, but what happens through her speech acts that constitutes her as a resisting subject. Consequently, even if Antigone, by disposition, behaves as arrogantly or closed-mindedly as Creon, it is still through her

performatives that she gets to be constituted as an agent for epistemic resistance. That is also one of the reasons why, for Butler in *Antigone's Claim*, the figure of Antigone cannot be a representative of any kind, but she points to a new horizon beyond the politics of representation as such (2).

vi. Defining Adaptation: Translation, New Version, Remaking, Rewriting

In this dissertation, the term adaptation is used in the wide sense employed by Linda Hutcheon in her seminal work *A Theory of Adaptation* (2006) as

> - An acknowledged transposition of a recognizable other work or works
> - A creative and an interpretative act of appropriation / salvaging
> - An extended intertextual engagement with the adapted work
>
> Therefore, an adaptation is a derivation that is not derivative – a work that is second without being secondary. It is its own palimpsestic thing. (8-9)

According to Hutcheon, the transposition can involve a shift of medium, genre, frame and context, as well as change between fiction and non-fiction (7-8). Writing on the palimpsestic characteristic of adaptations, she describes the purpose of her work as to challenge the "disparaging opinions on adaptation as a secondary mode – belated and derivative" (xv). She locates this denigration of adaptations in "the (post-) Romantic valuing of the original creation and of the originating creative genius" (4) even though previously the retelling of stories was given more credit. In contrast, Hutcheon argues that adaptations are not simple reproductions of originals, but they carry the Benjaminian aura of the artwork with them (4). In that sense, adaptation is the palimpsestic, intertextual, and creative engagement with an historically anterior work or works, including other adaptations of the same work. Or in Hutcheon's words, "Multiple versions exist laterally, not vertically" (xv). In terms of reimagining *Antigone* today, this dissertation agrees with Hutcheon's approach that challenges the prioritization of "originals" over adaptations and instead seeks to offer a kaleidoscopic and intertextual understanding of different adaptations which address contemporary political issues today. Additionally, I take up Hutcheon's broad understanding of the term to describe texts under the rubric of adaptation, whether they are identified by the authors as versions, translations or reworkings.

Adaptations of *Antigone* appear in a variety of forms, but they are not very easy to distinguish. For example, in their printed editions, Tom Paulin's *The Riot Act*, Brendan Kennelly's *Antigone*, and Owen McCafferty's *Antigone* are subtitled as "a new version", whereas Seamus

Heaney's *The Burial at Thebes* and Anne Carson's *Antigone* and *Antigonick* are presented as translations. Nevertheless, these "translations" respond to contemporary politics as acutely and creatively as the "versions". Heaney's play, generally regarded as a "version" in performance, includes strong references to the Bush administration and the occupation of Iraq. Moreover, Heaney acknowledges that he did not read Sophocles in the original ancient Greek, but he made use of existing English translations[15]. In contrast, Carson, as a classicist, is linguistically invested in the ancient Greek text; yet she too makes use of contemporary themes and vocabulary and rewrites the classical tragedy significantly. In *Antigonick*, which is a response to rather than a translation of Sophocles, she introduces a silent character named Nick and a discussion of Hegel and Beckett between Antigone and Ismene. These adaptations, whether they are named new versions or translations, have distinctive yet similar approaches to the classical tragedy: all of them make use of Sophocles' text while modernizing its vocabulary, poetics, and partly, its context. In performance, they make use of a contemporary set and costumes, which may or may not be explicit in the printed text.

Different from those that are named new versions or translations of Sophocles, there are also rewritings or remakes. Mee and Foley make a distinction between adaptation and remaking by pointing out that remaking "differs from adaptation in that it uses collage and bricolage to create something new that cites the received work, […] and that these reworkings reflect current events, cultures, and individuals, as well as our attitudes towards the remade materials (9). In contrast to them, I argue that remakings or reworkings are forms of adaptation whilst I make a similar distinction between new versions and reworkings. I argue that reworkings are still adaptations based on Hutcheon's definition that these works are still acknowledged transpositions in an intertextual relationship with the classical work in the double bind of appropriation and salvaging. However, different from new versions, these works decontextualize and reimagine the adapted text(s) to come up with a commentary on its own contemporary setting. Mee and Foley's emphasis on collage and bricolage rather apply to their definition of "remix", which they employ to refer to "a work composed of numerous quotations, often from a variety of media" (10). Because of their explicit engagement with their own political present as reflected through the play's plot as well as poetics and performative elements, this dissertation focuses on reworkings of *Antigone* particularly. Different from new versions that modernize the

[15] Heaney refers to his sources in "Title Deeds" as: "I've never studied ancient Greek so I was going to be relying on scholars such as Richard Claverhouse Jebb, who did a standard translation in accurate if by now slightly fusty Victorian English, and on the current edition of *Antigone* in the Loeb Classical Library" (422).

tragedy in similar ways, these works decontextualize the adapted play totally to deconstruct the hegemonic discourses, the political oppression, and the resistance to it through an engagement with the classical work. In that sense, reworkings employ more open forms of epistemic resistance, as argued throughout the chapters of this dissertation.

vii. Thesis Outline

In Chapter I, "Mobilizing *Antigone* for a Performative Resistant Politics", I start with two works that have taken up Sophocles' *Antigone* in political theory from a feminist perspective and made a case for a performative politics of resistance: Judith Butler's *Antigone's Claim* (2000) and Bonnie Honig's *Antigone, Interrupted* (2013). Reading Butler and Honig's discussion of *Antigone* alongside the theory of epistemic violence and resistance, I conclude that they argue in favour of the epistemic qualities that get worked out in Antigone's speech acts. However, they do not engage in a dialogue with contemporary *Antigone*s in their historical and global multiplicity, which runs the risk of essentializing Sophocles' *Antigone* as the original model for political thought within the Western canon. I argue that engaging with *Antigone* through postcolonial and Global South performances and critique adds to Butler and Honig's discussion for counter-sovereign forms of resistance and overturns the hegemony of the classics in politics in favour of a democratic, pluralistic, and decolonial approach.

The second chapter, "Writing Britain's Metics", engages with two recent works that turn toward Sophocles' play to nuance this equation and question how this understanding of terrorism has been instrumental in the epistemic injustice suffered by Muslim populations living in the West, and more particularly in Britain: Kamila Shamsie's novel *Home Fire* (2017) and Inua Ellams' play *Antigone* (2022). These works reflect on the politics of immigration and citizenship by putting *Antigone* into use through the very recent debates around the revoking of citizenship by the British Home Office. They both evoke the theme of the denial of burial to discuss how death gets to be instrumentalized in the contemporary world, and necropower is exerted to govern populations and assert state sovereignty.

In the third chapter "Irish *Antigone*s: Is it worth a handful of dust?", I offer a brief overview and analysis on the history of adapting *Antigone* in Ireland to argue that 21st century versions respond to both British colonialism and state oppression in Ireland, and to the horrors

of imperialist wars and occupations in the Middle East (especially the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan). This is evident in plays such as Conall Morrison's *Antigone* (2003) and Seamus Heaney's *The Burial at Thebes* (2004). Yet, the chapter focuses in more detail on two recent productions in Ireland, Colm Tóibín's *Pale Sister* (2019) and Darren Murphy's *X'ntigone* (2022), which have very strong resonances with the epistemic turn in *Antigone* adaptations and symbolically evoke the post 9/11 atmosphere. Both plays have an emphasis on speaking truth to power and are critical of rising right-wing populisms and post-truth politics endemic to their time of production.

In the fourth chapter, "'Come, death!': *Antigone* as Necroresistance in Turkey", I start by acknowledging how the performative role of *Antigone* relating to Turkey's unburied dead exceeds the space of theatre and is taken up by activists in different contexts such as a court defence speech by Selçuk Kozağaçlı. Şahika Tekand's play *Eurydice's Cry* (2007), by carving out an epistemic space for Eurydice and the collective resistance of the characters in the play, challenges the violence that has traditionally silenced women. The play embodies revolution through characters that embrace death, thereby raising the issue of necroresistance. Furthermore, the play also resists logocentrism and theatricality through a performative use of form related to Tekand's expression of politics. Berfin Zenderlioğlu's play *Antigone2012* is a rewriting of Sophocles' *Antigone*, which she reimagines as a revenge play in Kurdish (Kurmancî). Zenderlioğlu takes the motifs of the unburied dead brother and fratricidal war to work around the feelings of anger and resentment around the enforced disappearances and the newly excavated mass graves in Turkey's Kurdistan.

In this thesis, I approach the question of epistemic resistance through the overlapping histories of conflict and violence in Europe and the Middle East, as the works engage with current global political crises such as war in the Middle East, migration, women's rights, and necropolitics. In Britain, *Antigone* gets to be adapted to reflect the political problems faced by immigrant and refugee populations. In Ireland, how Antigone becomes an agent for postcolonial resistance goes hand in hand with how the play becomes a critique of imperialism and the war in the Middle East. Or the engagement with *Antigone* in Turkey emerges and develops within a vocabulary highly resonant with Turkey's membership application process to the European Union, but it also responds to rising right-wing populisms and dictatorial regimes in the world today. Mobilizing my own positionality as a Turkish scholar working in the English department with a background in Comparative Literature, my concentration has thus been on the

contemporary politics of adapting *Antigone* on the east and west borders of Europe while taking into consideration their respective relations to both neocolonialism and neoimperialism today.

viii. Note on Texts, Translations, Interviews, and Performances

The primary sources for this thesis fall into four categories: published prose works and play texts, unpublished play texts, and performances of plays (live or recorded). They are also originally in different languages, i.e., mostly in English, but also Turkish and Kurdish (Kurmancî), as well as Sophocles in Ancient Greek. In terms of languages, I have chosen to refer to primary sources in English, with bracketed reference in the original language. Wherever a word, a phrase, or a sentence was particularly important in the original language, I have retained the original in italics and provided English translations afterwards.

In dealing with Sophocles' *Antigone*, which I may call the "urtext" and common ground for my analysis, I have primarily chosen Robert Fagles' translation in Penguin Classics, which I found useful for the sake of clarity of argument. I have also referred to Loeb Classical Library edition in the footnotes, both in Ancient Greek and English translation by Hugh Lloyd-Jones. In general, my primary sources have been English translations as these texts were also the source texts of the adaptations I was dealing with; therefore, they were also part of meaning making processes historically. As I am not a classicist by training, the linguistic aspects and nuances in the Ancient Greek text has not been central to my argument; however, I referred to them in parallel with the translations and made use of specific terms such as metic / *metoikos* [μέτοικος] whenever they were significant for the discussion.

In terms of performances, I watched Inua Ellams' *Antigone* live at the Regent's Park, London on 22 September 2022 and Colm Tóibín's *Pale Sister* as it was streamed on BBC4 during the lockdown. However, I was unable to attend the live performances of *Pale Sister* and Darren Muphy's *X'ntigone* due to either travel restrictions in the period or visa problems. I have interviewed Şahika Tekand, Berfin Zenderlioğlu, and Inua Ellams on their work, and I am also grateful to them for sharing the recordings of their plays' performances, and in the case of Tekand and Zenderlioğlu, their unpublished play texts with me. Therefore, in terms of texts, I have had access to unpublished texts of plays in addition to published materials. In addition to the primary materials, I was able to access recordings of Polly Findlay's *Antigone* production at the National Theatre on NT Live, Ivo van Hove's production of Anne Carson's *Antigone* on Box

of Broadcasts, *Antigone of Shatila* (also known as *Antigone of Syria*) as streamed as part of an online symposium, "In the Event of Antigone: Crossings, Translations, Restagings" on 12-13 December 2022, and the documentary *We are not Princesses* as part of a film screening event at APGRD/ TORCH on 13 June 2019 at Oxford University. Finally, I have conducted archive visits to access various materials related to my research in Istanbul and Ankara State Theatre Archives in Turkey, as well as Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama (APGRD) at Oxford University.

Chapter I

Mobilizing *Antigone* for a Performative Politics of Resistance

Two contemporary thinkers who have responded to Sophocles' *Antigone* by writing a book within political theory and from a feminist perspective making a case for a performative politics of resistance are Judith Butler in *Antigone's Claim* (2000) and Bonnie Honig in *Antigone, Interrupted* (2013). In this chapter, I argue that the works of these thinkers not only make use of *Antigone* to rethink the limits of the resistant political subject, but at the same time end up rewriting and, in this sense, changing, reworking and adapting the tragedy whilst they do so outside the world of fiction. The theoretical works of Butler and Honig do not belong to the realm of the performative arts, but they mobilize some of the performative qualities in Sophocles' play to expand their discussion of political resistance, and more particularly epistemic resistance. Prominent features of Sophocles' tragedy such as its rhetoric, the primacy of narration over action, the silences within the text, the problem of identity, the juxtaposition and the immediate politics of kinship and the state, its use of ambivalent discourses and the in-between state of the protagonist are revisited by Butler and Honig to expand their understanding of a resistant politics. Another shared characteristic for Butler and Honig is that both write within post-Hegelian philosophical thought and formulate their respective cases for the figure of Antigone contra Hegelian philosophy. In this sense, it is not surprising that they continue to evoke Sophocles' *Antigone*, the model tragedy for Hegel's thought, in continuity with a feminist critique of Hegel from Luce Irigaray onwards. However, there is more to their works in the sense that now they go beyond a critique of Hegel to an overall formulation for a new resistant politics to emerge. They not only complicate Hegel's understanding of Antigone as "the eternal irony of the community", but they come up with a new theory on how to exist epistemically beyond the confines of contemporary forms of sovereignty and its politics of representation. Therefore, I would like to read their works as pioneering philosophical discussions that rewrite the contemporary understanding of *Antigone* from an epistemic perspective and shift the play's historical meaning and significance toward a renewed political approach.

First Butler, and then in response to her, Honig turn toward Sophocles' classical tragedy and mobilize its canonical status to question the stakes of a feminist political theory to defy the state, and for their purposes, the tragedy becomes a rich source both for its subject and for its form and symbolism. As both thinkers work freely through *Antigone*, they join a number of modern philosophers and thinkers, from Hegel to Lacan and Irigaray, who have theorized and developed their own interpretations of the play, and like them, they do not take into consideration the proliferation of *Antigone*s in the contemporary world, which runs the risk of essentializing Sophocles' *Antigone* as the original model for political thought within the Western canon today. However, on one hand, the theories they develop around *Antigone* provide a very useful framework to work through the political perspectives introduced by the various adaptations, such as Shamsie, Ellams, Tóibín or Tekand. On the other hand, engaging with *Antigone* through postcolonial and Global South performances and critique adds to Butler and Honig's discussion for counter-sovereign forms of resistance and overturns the hegemony of the classics in politics in favour of a democratic, pluralistic, and decolonial approach. Therefore, these theoretical works do in fact benefit greatly from an open dialogue with the perspectives introduced by these adaptations. In that sense, I find it important to analyse their work in a way to initiate the creative conversation between political theory and performance traditions, which is the subject matter of the subsequent chapters of the thesis.

1. 1. Judith Butler's *Antigone's Claim*

Antigone's Claim is of seminal importance for the purposes of this dissertation for two reasons: Firstly, Butler's work offers to rethink the figure of a resistant political subject beyond the politics of representation by reading Sophocles' *Antigone* from within political philosophy. This project also finds meaning in the larger framework of Butler's thought and her overall project of overturning Hegel. Secondly, it is also meaningful as a particular exegetical reading of Sophocles' *Antigone* from an epistemological perspective: Butler here reflects on the epistemic quality of Antigone's defiance by focusing on the performative aspect of Antigone's speech acts and provides one of the first examples of reading and hence adapting Antigone's resistance predominantly as a discursive practice at the turn of 21st century. In this section, I propose to read Butler's work alongside the theoretical writings on epistemic injustice to understand how Butler's work mobilizes Antigone as an agent for epistemic resistance.

Even though Butler does not employ the terminology of epistemic resistance, I argue that her reading of *Antigone* is in harmony with this strand in analytical philosophy and nuances this theory with a renewed approach on Antigone's resistance. Butler mentions the phrase "epistemic resistance" in *Bodies That Matter* once ah she engages with the theatricalization of political rage. She writes that in protests which "act out", such as the die-ins in AIDS activism or the kiss-ins in queer activism, the hyperbolic display of death and injury or kissing aims "to overwhelm the epistemic resistance to AIDS and to the graphics of suffering" or "to shatter the epistemic blindness to an increasingly graphic and public homosexuality" (178). Here, Butler employs these terms to denote negative epistemic resistances in Medina's terminology, i.e., "the structural and systemic attitudes and dispositions exercised by those in a position of power and privilege" (30); however, she does not employ any terminology to refer to the epistemic aspect of political resistance exercised by the marginalized or the oppressed. Medina's two-sided conceptualization of epistemic resistance in terms of both positive epistemic resistances (exercised by the disenfranchised to counter hegemony and sovereignty) and negative epistemic resistances (exercised by those in positions of power to silence people) is viable here to think about the performative utterances central to Butler's thought. In other respects, Butler's understanding of performativity also nuances the understanding of epistemic resistance by shifting the focus from intentions, prejudices and subjectivities of individuals and groups toward interpellation, reiteration, and what comes into being in the course of action, which in turn defines subjectivities. This dimension of performativity as put forward by Butler also changes the scope of the epistemic field from being a totally discursive space to being a site of action. Consequently, Antigone's speech acts not only counter those of Creon, but they do something at the moment of their utterance and become instances of political action.

At the beginning of *Antigone's Claim*, Butler starts from questioning the exemplary status of the figure of Antigone and the legacy of her defiance for feminist politics. Above all, Butler cautions against taking the figure from Sophocles' play as a model without acknowledging her fictional status and criticizes all those from Hegel to Lacan and Irigaray for treating her as a representative of sorts and for forgetting that her fictionality runs the risk of "slipping into irreality" (*Antigone's Claim* 1). Alternatively, for Butler, Antigone is the figure for a new horizon of politics that open up when the limits to representation and representability are exposed (2). Yet, in "The Queer Heroics of Butler's Antigone", Marie Draz draws attention to how Butler, too, needs Antigone to represent something for her, "even if part of what Antigone represents is the crisis of the 'representative function itself'" (215). From a methodological point of view, as

Butler takes up Antigone as a figure for politics, which indeed gives her another representative status in spite of her fictionality, her approach approximates Hegel's. Besides, she goes beyond the confines of a single play and treats Antigone as a continuous figure in Attic tragedy, all the way from Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes*, to Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, *Oedipus Colonus*, and *Antigone*. As Butler assumes a continuous persona for Antigone and plots of different plays as parts of a consistent myth, she also goes beyond her task of thinking through *Antigone* (the play) or Antigone (Sophocles' protagonist) about the conditions for a resistant politics in relation to precarity and the performativity, but she simultaneously rewrites a new version of *Antigone* based on the four tragedies in which the figure appears[16]. Butler's *Antigone* becomes a narrative for a resistant agency that emerges by laying claim to a political sphere through her speech acts and by achieving recognition by means of an epistemic form of resistance before everything else.

Butler's understanding of *Antigone* stands out from earlier interpretations in theory by focusing solely on the performativity of Antigone's speech or Antigone's verbal defiance of Creon through speech acts in Sophocles' play. According to Butler, Antigone acts twice. First, she acts by burying her brother, and "[t]he act is everywhere delivered through speech acts" (*Antigone's Claim* 7). Even though Butler is not concerned here with tragic form, what she finds noteworthy is mainly due to the rhetorical strategies employed by Sophoclean tragedy, in which narration constitutes much of the action on stage, and hence performatives play an important role to convey the effect to create action in words. Nevertheless, it still demonstrates that the speech act aspect is already there for Sophocles from the start. Secondly, Antigone acts verbally when she appears before Creon and counters his sovereignty in performatives that resemble his. So, the first performative belongs to Creon in the form of an illocutionary speech act, which, for Butler, "is delivered as an imperative, one that has the power to do what it says, explicitly forbidding anyone to bury that body" (8). Indeed, Creon frames his edict in the form of an illocutionary performative by saying "Closely akin to them I have proclaimed, / Just now the following decree to our people"[17] (Sophocles, Fagles, ll. 215-216) and in reference to Polynices, Creon comments that "a proclamation has forbidden the city / to dignify him with burial, mourn him at all"[18] (ll. 227-228). Thus, Creon does not just proclaim his edict, but he also announces to

[16] This reading also puts Butler in conversation with critics and theorists who experiment with this creative breaking of the disciplinary boundaries such as Anne Carson in *Antigonick* (2012) and Slavoj Žižek in *The Three Lives of Antigone* (2016).

[17] καὶ νῦν ἀδελφὰ τῶνδε κηρύξας ἔχω (ll. 192) (and now in consonance with them I have made to the citizens this proclamation)

[18] τοῦτον πόλει τῇδ᾽ ἐκκεκήρυκται τάφῳ μήτε κτερίζειν μήτε κωκῦσαί τινα (ll. 203-204) (it is proclaimed to this city, none shall bury or lament)

proclaim it, thereby marking it as a speech act. Similarly, Butler draws attention to the lines where Antigone does not just admit her deed, but she refuses to deny that she has done it, by saying "I did it. I don't deny a thing"[19] (ll. 492). According to Butler, "to claim 'I will not deny my deed' is to refuse to perform a denial, but it is not precisely to claim the act. To say, 'Yes, I did it,' is to claim the act, but it is also to commit another deed in the very claiming, the act of publishing one's deed, a new criminal venture that redoubles and takes place of the old" (*Antigone's Claim* 8). Therefore, for Butler, a dynamic between Creon and Antigone that works itself in the form of an ongoing clash of speech acts becomes both what distinguishes the performative aspect of the play and its central conflict that exceeds Antigone's deed.

Butler's perspective in *Antigone's Claim* is informed by her use and critique of Austin's speech act theory in her earlier book *Excitable Speech*, where she is predominantly concerned with the rhetorical in relation to the political. In *Excitable Speech*, Butler begins from "linguistic vulnerability", i.e., how language can have the power to injure. As human beings are formed in language, this formative power conditions the human being and has it in its grasp from the start (2). One example of this power to injure is Althusser's understanding of interpellation or "name calling", "one of the conditions in which a subject is constituted in language". Butler comments that "If to be addressed is to be interpellated, then the offensive call runs the risk of inaugurating a subject in speech who comes to use language to counter the offensive call" (2). Even though Butler does not yet evoke Antigone in *Excitable Speech*, this comment has strong resonances when we come to think of how the figure of Antigone is constituted by Creon's "offensive call". Creon invents a crime through his edict that nobody can bury Polyneices' body, formulated in the form of a speech act previously quoted, beginning as "I have proclaimed"[20] (Sophocles, Fagles ll. 215). In that sense, Creon's speech act interpellates and brings into being the criminal act that would not be deemed a crime prior to its enunciation. In that sense, what interpellates and constitutes Antigone as a defiant figure is Creon's speech act. According to Timothy Gould in "The Unhappy Performative",

> Creon has thus intertwined performative and descriptive forces, as if he would use speech to interdict the power of speech itself. He thus guarantees that any utterance and any feeling on behalf of Polyneices will be taken as rebellion. More than this: he has made sure that it will be rebellion. Creon's performance helps

[19] καὶ φημὶ δρᾶσαι κοὐκ ἀπαρνοῦμαι τὸ μή. (ll. 443) (I say that I did it and I do not deny it.)

[20] τῶνδε κηρύξας ἔχω (ll. 192) (I have made … this proclamation)

> create the ground for to a deeper and more radical disobedience to the state than had yet been possible. (35)

Thus, it is not just Antigone who counters Creon's speech acts with hers, but it is first and foremost Creon, who creates the crime and the conditions that facilitate it, as well as the discursive space that interpellates and casts Antigone as rebellious. Therefore, Creon's edict is similar to the "offensive call" in *Excitable Speech* in terms of interpellation, constituting a subject in language.

In *Excitable Speech*, Butler details Austin's speech act theory and his distinction between illocutionary speech acts, i.e., "the speech acts that, in saying do what they say, and do it in the moment of that saying", and perlocutionary speech acts, "speech acts that produce certain effects as their consequence" (3). In that respect, Creon's edict, i.e., the prohibition of Polyneices' burial, is an illocutionary speech act or performative in Austin's terminology, a speech act that has the power to do what it says in the moment of saying it. But it suffers from an "illocutionary failure" (*Antigone's Claim* 8), becoming "an unhappy performative", first with Antigone's act of burial and then with her speech act that openly opposes Creon's, in which she refuses to deny that she did the deed. According to Butler, Antigone and Creon's speech acts are "chiasmically related" (28), or in other words, the act of threat and the threatened act are distinct, but also "related as a chiasmus" (*Excitable Speech* 11); they are constitutive of one another:

> Instead of obliterating the possibility of a response, paralyzing the addressee with fear, the threat may well be countered by a different kind of a performative act, one that exploits the redoubled action of the threat (what is intentionally and non-intentionally performed in any speaking), to turn one part of that speaking against the other, confounding the performative power of the threat." (12)

Therefore, the response that the threat could not anticipate but nevertheless solicited results in the loss of its own sovereign sense of expectation when confronted by the resistance it inaugurated. As Antigone counters Creon's speech acts with sovereign language borrowed from him in the form of illocutionary and perlocutionary speech acts, what emerges is the two fighting discourses mirroring and invested in one another as they come into being and give rise to their subjectivities.

Developing her ideas in *Excitable Speech* in terms of the power of language to injure, illocutionary speech acts and the iterability of sovereign speech, in *Antigone's Claim*, Butler shifts the emphasis from Antigone's act, i.e., her burial of her brother, to Antigone's speech acts, i.e., the ways in which Antigone assumes a voice through appropriating the voice of the sovereign.

Just as in *Excitable Speech* Butler cautions against conflating speech and conduct, in her analysis of *Antigone*, she again draws a distinction between Antigone's defiant act and her defiant speech acts. In the play, first of all, there is the issue of burial that takes place twice, the second of which becomes the instance for the guards to report the deed to Creon. Then, there is her verbal act: "When she appears before Creon, she acts again, this time verbally, refusing to deny that it was she who did the deed" (7). So, Antigone's act of burial, is also performative and has the quality of making a verbal claim. The burial makes a statement of Antigone's disobedience, which she acknowledges before Creon. Yet, Butler makes a case that what distinguishes the act throughout Sophocles' play is the fact that it is constantly delivered through speech acts: "The only way that the doer is attached to the deed is through the linguistic assertion of the connection." She comments that "Antigone's deed is, in fact, ambiguous from the start, not only the defiant act in which she buries her brother but the verbal act in which she answers Creon's question; thus, hers is an act in language: To publish one's act in language is in some sense the completion of her act" (10). By saying this, she also prioritizes Antigone's speech over her deed. Even if the deed, too, has the performative quality, it is her speech act that constitutes her resistance politically. Hence, the symbolic importance of Antigone's deed does not arise from her act of burial, but from the way she resists Creon by confronting him verbally. In this way, Butler shifts the emphasis of Antigone's defiant deed from her act of burial to her verbal claim and argues that only through her speech acts, does Antigone assert her own sovereignty against Creon's.

In her critique of the concept of the autonomous sovereign subject, Butler rejects the idea that agency and responsibility can only be possible with some form of sovereignty. Instead, she opts for the opposite, which is the agency and responsibility that arises when sovereignty wanes (*Excitable Speech* 15-16). According to Butler, the subject is first and foremost constituted in language: "The one who acts (who is not the same as the sovereign subject) acts precisely to the extent that he or she is constituted as an actor and, hence, operating within a linguistic field of enabling constraints from the outset" (16). Language precedes the subject. However, being conditioned by language does not mean that one cannot resist. Butler, here, emphasizes a more general theory of the performativity of political discourse, underlining that "a theory of the performative is already at work in the exercise of political discourse". As political discourse is performative, i.e., it enacts what it says by just saying it, in which "saying is itself the doing" (17), sovereign speech constitutes the subject in a subordinate way. Yet, it also lays the foundation for resistance: "the very terms of resistance and insurgency are spawned in part by the powers they oppose (which is not to say that the latter are reducible to the former or always already coopted

by them in advance)" (40). The condition of sovereignty does not necessarily mean the end of any possibility for resistance or rebellion; on the contrary, it creates a situation of crisis from which an unpredictable resistance might emerge simply by following the steps of the sovereign, but this time without the injury created by its sovereignty. The conditions of resistance are thus brought about by the terms that try to limit the subject. According to Butler, "The language that counters the injuries of speech, however, must repeat those injuries without precisely reenacting them" (*Excitable Speech* 40-41). For Butler, "misappropriating the force of injurious language to counter its injurious operations" (41) is a resistant strategy that makes room for critical agency and enables the recipients of hate speech to counter this violence and transcend the passive state of mere victimhood enforced on them even if, from a juridical perspective, it can only be the state that can intervene into this situation of crisis.

Throughout *Antigone's Claim*, Butler repeatedly turns toward her idea that Antigone's speech acts mirror the sovereign's discourse, that Antigone "absorbs the very language of the state against which she rebels" (5), that "her language, paradoxically, most closely approximates Creon's, the language of sovereign authority and action" (6), and that "her contestation takes the verbal form of a reassertion of sovereignty" (8). In Butler's reading,

> She not only does the deed, refusing to obey the edict, but she also does it again by refusing to deny that she has done it, thus appropriating the rhetoric of agency from Creon himself. Her agency emerges precisely through her refusal to honor his command, and yet the language of this refusal assimilates the very terms of sovereignty that she refuses. He expects that his words will govern her deeds, and she speaks back to him, countering his sovereign speech act by asserting her sovereignty. (11)

For Butler, Antigone's sovereign speech acts mean a quest for sovereignty on Antigone's part, a claim endorsed more openly by Bonnie Honig in *Antigone Interrupted*. Nevertheless, the question emerges as to whether Antigone's assimilation of the sovereign's discourse is at odds with Butler's requirement of "the waning of sovereignty" for true political agency. In short, is Antigone a sovereign subject in her counter-sovereignty or not? For Butler, the short answer is negative. Neither Antigone's counter-sovereign gesture, nor her appropriation of the sovereign's discourse qualifies her as one. Antigone speaks in the sovereign's speech where she is denied language as a woman. She transcends her confinement to the private sphere by speaking up in public. Then, she insists on grieving openly where she is denied grieving. Moreover, she acts where she is denied action, and she acts against the state. Even though her grief is prohibited by an edict, she performs all her speech acts from a position of entitlement that parallels those of

Creon. All these have the effect of Antigone's subversion of sovereignty even if she cannot achieve sovereignty for herself in the end. Her acts not only shake and defy Creon's authority, but they also give rise to a resistant subjectivity that is characterized by her political claim to appear.

Butler's understanding of the subversion of the sovereign's discourse takes effect from Derrida's notion of iterability. According to Derrida, a performative utterance derives its success from its iterability or citationality. It is the very repeatability of the performative that renders it authoritative. For example, the formula for illocutionary speech acts such as opening a meeting, launching a ship, or pronouncing a marriage is only recognizable within an iterable model. Derrida also adds a nuance to Austin's idea that there is always a "relative purity" in every single speech act: "In such a typology, the category of intention will not disappear; it will have its place, but from that place it will no longer be able to govern the entire scene and system of utterance [*l'énonciation*]" (Derrida, "Signature, Event, Context" 18). Therefore, Derrida draws attention to the relative autonomy that springs from the iterability of performatives that change their signification under different contexts: "Différance," he remarks, "the irreducible absence of intention or attendance to the performative utterance, the most 'event-ridden' utterance there is, is what authorizes me, taking account of the predicates just recalled, to posit the general graphemic structure of every 'communication'" (18-19). Hence, the deferred meaning of the speech act becomes an instance where meaning can be reinvented. Taking Derrida's account of the citationality of the speech act one step further, Butler draws attention to the ways deviations from norms take place, and hence, she develops iterability as a resistant strategy for politics. For Butler, it is the very iterability of political discourse that enables those deprived of sovereign power to repeat this discourse without its context and appropriate it for resistance. Hence, Antigone's resistant strategy is her capacity to mobilize the iterability of the sovereign's speech. She repeats this discourse even though she is deprived of sovereign power. Hence, she destabilizes sovereign power by infiltrating into its language, recontextualizing it, and stripping it of its hegemonic power.

Antigone's "claim", then, is closely related to the performativity of her language and action. In *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* [henceforth *Notes*], Butler sets out to explain her theoretical itinerary from gender performativity to the politics of precarity, which closely resembles the way she interprets Antigone's performative acts in *Antigone's Claim*. In *Notes*, she underlines that when there are a set of laws or codes that consider the right to choose

one's sexuality as criminal or dishonourable, then the claim to one's right to choose one's sexuality is itself performative in the sense of Austin's illocutionary speech acts (57). Moreover, just as certain acts that individuals perform could have a subversive effect on gender norms, acting from a precarious or vulnerable position could also have a subversive effect on normative politics and sovereignty, and they may show the precarity of these very norms. To translate these into the example of *Antigone*, when Creon comes up with a law that criminalizes Antigone's right to grieve, then Antigone's claim to her right to grieve becomes performative in itself. Antigone is precarious in the sense that she is both totally outside the power structure and not normative, not conforming with the established norms around gender and kinship. In this sense, it is Antigone's precarity that has a subversive effect on Creon's sovereign power, showing the precarity of Creon's role, as well.

The liminality of Antigone's position is also what enables her to challenge normative forms of gender, kinship, and law. According to Butler, first of all, her insistence on public grieving causes her to be called "manly" by the guards, Chorus and Creon, (*Antigone's Claim* 8) moving Antigone "away from feminine gender into hubris, into that distinctively manly excess" (*Antigone's Claim* 80). Butler here refers primarily to the scene before Antigone is caught and everybody assumes that it must be a man committing the burial such as when Creon asks, "What man alive would dare"[21] (Sophocles, Fagles ll. 281), and both the Chorus and the sentry take male gender for granted. Additionally, Creon also refers to Antigone's manly qualities which he finds emasculating. He exclaims "I am not the man, not now: she is the man / if this victory goes to her and she goes free"[22] (ll. 541-542). Secondly, being the daughter/sister of Oedipus, the equivocality of her kinship status and her relation to incest demonstrates her position as the aberration from kinship norms. Butler describes Antigone's deed as "a trespass on the norms of kinship and gender that exposes the precarious character of those norms, their sudden and disturbing transferability, and their capacity to be reiterated in contexts and in ways that are not fully to be anticipated" (*Antigone's Claim* 24). Thirdly, her insistence on publicly grieving her loss and her refusal to obey any law that denies her grief public recognition points toward a politics located at this liminality of a number of dichotomies: between the outside and inside of the norm, between life and death, between the public and private spheres. In this sense, Antigone also calls for a redefinition of what is normatively defined as "the human".

[21] τίς ἀνδρῶν ἦν ὁ τολμήσας τάδε; (ll. 248) (What man has dared to do this?)
[22] ἦ νῦν ἐγὼ μὲν οὐκ ἀνήρ, αὕτη δ᾽ ἀνήρ,
εἰ ταῦτ᾽ ἀνατεὶ τῇδε κείσεται κράτη. (ll. 484-485)
(Indeed, now I am no man, but she is a man, if she is to enjoy such power as this with impunity.)

This liminality is also directly related to the ontological status of the stateless as "bare life" in the works of Agamben and Arendt, which Butler evokes. This realm without the rights of citizenship define those who are precluded not only from the public sphere, but also from the public constitution of the human. The suspension of legal rights and the radical exclusion of certain populations from the political sphere produce a constitutive outside that conditions and facilitates the political sphere as such. However, different from Agamben's conceptualization of "bare life", for Butler, the idea of a constitutive outside is not passive. She criticises Agamben for disregarding "the modes of agency undertaken by the stateless, the occupied, and the disenfranchised, since even the life stripped of rights is still within the sphere of the political, and thus not reduced to mere being, but is, more often than not, angered, indignant, rising up, and resisting" (*Notes* 80). Instead, Butler opts for an agency for the ones reduced to bare life, who insistently appear in public as if to say "'we have not slipped quietly into the shadows of public life: we have not become the glaring absence that structures your public life'" (152). Hence, Butler's constitutive outside is always already inside making a claim on the oppressors.

In this respect, for Butler, Antigone belongs to those that make up "a constitutive outside", representative of the radical exclusion of precarious populations in their aberrant form (*Antigone's Claim* 82). In "Outside/In: Antigone and the Limits of Politics", Sina Kramer draws attention to the process of constitutive exclusion in Antigone: "Antigone figures the radical potential – sparked for a moment – of the outside of politics, inside, calling into question the limits of sovereignty, authority, and politics as they are defined by means of constitutive exclusion" (183). In Kramer's definition, "Constitutive exclusion describes both a structure and a process by which a system, symbolic, or body is constituted through the exclusion of some difference that is intolerable to it, and against which it defines or constitutes itself" (174). Antigone's status as an outside that is inside is also what enables her political action. Her aberration of the public and private, life and death, inside and outside disrupts the mutual exclusivity of these binaries and opens up a space for resistance, subversion, and political change. In this sense, Antigone not only upsets the normative vocabulary around kinship, gender, and agency in her liminality, but she also insists on appearing in public in her excess of the norm and making a claim through her speech acts. As such, she becomes representative of the politics that get invented when the less than human makes their appearance in the public sphere, blasting the norms of sovereignty from within. That is why Butler concludes *Antigone's Claim* on this note of Antigone being "the occasion for a new field of the human achieved through political

catachresis" (82). As Antigone insists on her speech, she also infiltrates into the discourse of intelligibility.

Whilst Butler's understanding of the constitutive outside is an expression of her critique of the sovereign Subject, she fails to acknowledge the colonial and postcolonial logic that sustains it. In contrast to Butler, Spivak's postcolonial analysis of epistemic violence unveils the ways in which the Subject of knowledge is always the West ("Can the Subaltern Speak?" 304). What Butler does not take into consideration is that the Western subject is premised on the colonial exclusion of the Other of Europe (318). Therefore, the problem is how this constitutive outside can counter the epistemic violence and claim subjecthood if the idea of subjectivity is conditioned on their position as outsiders. In a way to develop Spivak's reference to Bhuvaneswari's subversive act as an interventionist way to rewrite the social text, Butler's conceptualization of performativity steps in to demonstrate instances of interventionist acts, which find an outstanding expression in the example of *Antigone*. What aligns Butler with Spivak is the decentring of the Subject that is crucial for both thinkers in their understanding of performatives. It is first and foremost language itself that is open to reiteration and citation, and therefore exerts a surplus beyond the intentions of the speaker. The subject in their consciousness can neither grasp nor control the full extent of their meaning. There is always a surplus of meaning that gets invented in the performative. That is also how Butler distinguishes between a performance, which emphasizes the intentionality on the part of the speaker/doer and presupposes a subject prior to the deed; and performatives, which transcend the performer, and for which the interpellative role of language is central in the constitution of the subject caught within the act. Therefore, in the case of Antigone, it is her performative acts that constitute her as a resistant subject first and foremost within language. Butler's Antigone is not a feminist activist or a representative of any kind; she only represents a perversion or an aberration of the law, the norm, or kinship relations. However, through the epistemic friction between her and Creon, she opens up a new epistemic space in her diversion from the norm, and as such, points toward a new performative possibility beyond the politics of representation.

Both in *Notes* and *Antigone's Claim*, "claim" is a keyword in Butler's vocabulary to initiate a performative action that is subversive and counter-hegemonic in its nature. She writes that "it's not a question of first having power and then being able to act; sometimes it is a question of acting, and in the acting, laying claim to the power one requires. This is performativity as I understand it, and it is also a way of acting from and against precarity" (*Notes* 58). It is thus the

acting that precedes and brings about the subject: "There is a collective acting without a preestablished collective subject; rather, the 'we' is enacted by the assembly of bodies, plural, persisting, acting, and laying claim to a public sphere by which one has been abandoned" (59). Therefore, the acting also becomes a "claim" in language or a speech act. The performativity of political action gives birth to both a new political subjecthood and its claim. Butler explains that those who cannot appear as subjects within hegemonic discourses can only emerge as subjects through an insistent form of appearing at the exact time and place in which they are effaced. Then, the sphere of appearance breaks and opens in new ways (37).

Butler's approach to the performativity of political action opts for new horizons for the legitimation of new resistant discourses, "the opening up of the foreclosed and the saying of the unspeakable become part of the very 'offense' that must be committed in order to expand the domain of linguistic survival" (*Excitable Speech* 41). Also, in *Notes*, she underlines that counterhegemonic forms of knowing open up a new epistemic field: "There's a distinct field of the human that remains unrecognizable according to dominant norms, but which is obviously recognizable within the epistemic field opened up by counterhegemonic forms of knowing" (*Notes* 36). Saying the unspeakable and doing the undoable is also the crime that Antigone commits in Sophocles' tragedy. Antigone's aberration of gender and kinship norms and her transgression into language and politics from which she is excluded becomes the condition for a new epistemic field to emerge and sustain alternative forms of agency (subjecthood) that are counter-hegemonic and counter-sovereign. Departing from Antigone, Butler questions what the conditions of intelligibility and recognition are that would make life, grief, and love possible for Antigone and for all those that confound kinship. She concludes that destabilization of normative structures of kinship and reigning epistemes of cultural intelligibility also open up the possibility of social transformation (*Antigone's Claim* 24). By confronting and defying the sovereign with her own speech acts, Antigone performatively opens up a new space for her hitherto unacknowledged discourse and/or testimony to emerge, thereby defying not only Creon, but also challenging the epistemic violence directed at her in the form of hermeneutical and testimonial injustices.

Butler's project in rewriting Antigone of Sophocles' tragedy as a politically transgressive figure is a performative act within the field of political theory to carve out a space to resist epistemically in the contemporary world. In that regard, it is not just the iterability of Antigone's performative speech acts, but rather the iterability and citationality of the play that condition Butler's reading and her politics of precarity. On one hand, one could interpret Butler's project

as a Derridean gesture contra Hegel and Lacan. What she does, in the last analysis, is to reiterate and subvert the established readings of *Antigone* in modern continental thought. Her attempt is also open to being read as counter discourse in itself. According to Marie Draz, "Part of what Butler sees in Antigone seems to be precisely what feminist theatre practitioners have seen in canonical texts for decades: the chance to send dominant narratives, and in this case – given how the Oedipal story has been used as a cultural text – dominant origin stories, in directions they were perhaps never intended to travel" (216). According to Draz, what Butler shares with feminist authors, playwrights and theatre practitioners, such as Kamila Shamsie, Anne Carson, and Şahika Tekand is the project of adapting/rewriting *Antigone* performatively so as to subvert its canonical implications, which gives rise to a feminist/queer counter-discourse. In that sense, from a feminist perspective, what I find lacking in Butler's method is the lack of engagement with these works that directly speak to her political concerns. Instead, she singles out – to put it in Simon Goldhill's authoritative jargon – "one of the grandest of all dead white males, Sophocles" (*Sophocles and the Language of Tragedy* 3).

Butler receives rightful criticism from classicists in her attempt at interpreting Sophocles' *Antigone*. To cite a few examples, Stuart Elden is critical of Butler's "political blindness", which he sees in her conflation of "polis" with "the state" and the equation of both in the term "the public sphere". On another note, Simon Goldhill criticizes "the selective blindness of hero worship" Butler engages in when she focuses solely on the figure of Antigone and disregards Ismene or the relationship between the sisters (*Sophocles and the Language of Tragedy* 246). Yet, the "blindness" in question is perhaps more on the part of Hegel than Butler who writes within and against this tradition of thinking. When Butler puts a disclaimer in the beginning of *Antigone's Claim* by writing "I am no classicist and do not strive to be one. I read *Antigone* as many humanists have because the play poses questions about kinship and the state that recur in a number of cultural and historical contexts" (3), she does not opt for a right to decontextualize the classical text and appropriate it in the most pragmatic way. On the contrary, by locating herself within a tradition of thinking, she underscores that she will be thinking about kinship and the state through *Antigone*, in a way to respond to this history and broaden the limits of theory through tragedy. Therefore, hers is inevitably a selective and contemporary reading, which I consequently propose to take as a rewriting. Nevertheless, the fact that Butler is writing against Hegel via *Antigone* raises the question as to whether she could rewrite *Antigone* differently from how he does, with more concern to the form, dramaturgy or performance aspect of the tragedy.

Or as I argued previously, she could address her primary concern on contemporary politics by performatively taking recourse to contemporary responses to the play around the world.

There are also critics who align Butler with modern adaptations of *Antigone*. For example, Draz concludes that "We might understand Butler's desire here as related to a contemporary multiplication of Antigones, rather than a recuperation of Sophocles' Antigone. Plainly, Butler wants to carve out a space in which contemporary Antigones do not have to commit suicide or find themselves in a living tomb" (210-11). Likewise, according to Kramer, while Antigone's claim fails within the confines of Sophocles' play, the multiple reimaginings of Antigone in the modern adaptations of the play take up and work through this claim: "In these cases, the play preserves Antigone's excess, her struggle, and her perversion of the law for the sake of articulating a new law" (183). Draz and Kramer read Butler's project as a contemporary one that talks to figures who find themselves in a situation similar to Antigone, and who through their subversive reiteration of norms set out to counter the hegemonic terms of the status quo. In this sense, Butler's project is to performatively open up an epistemic space through *Antigone* for the precarious to both exist in and transform the contemporary world politically. At the same time, she also develops theoretical tools to interpret subsequent versions of the play performatively.

1. 2. Bonnie Honig's *Antigone, Interrupted*

Bonnie Honig's *Antigone, Interrupted* is an attempt in political theory at an interruption in the reception history of Sophocles' *Antigone* in favour of a politics of agonistic humanism, and as such it also reimagines and rewrites the tragedy. Honig opts for a politics of counter-sovereignty, conspiracy, and solidarity as exemplified by the play and in opposition to what she terms as the politics of lamentation in the contemporary theoretical work on the tragedy, which she predominantly finds in Butler's work. However, just like Butler's *Antigone's Claim*, whilst Honig's book is positioned contra Hegel theoretically and politically, it is also historically and methodologically indebted to Hegel in terms of setting the character and the play as a model for political thought. Hegel's influential reading of *Antigone* as the paradigmatic play that exemplifies the tragedy of the ethical life of the Spirit and the forward movement of history also provokes Honig to develop her own democratic theory based on the idea of popular sovereignty in the construction of political agency, which is distinctive from Foucault and Agamben's discussion of sovereignty. Hence, Honig rewrites *Antigone* as a political theorist does, mobilizing its impact on

post-Hegelian political thought. Her target readers are not dramatists but democratic theorists to whom she sets out to make a case on behalf of collective life. The method Honig chooses for her task is to reframe Antigone's politicization in a new light which emphasizes this political actor's "conspiracy with language"; that is, her speech acts in their totality; her potential multiplicity of meanings, use of counter-sovereignties, alliances, conspiracies, and appeal to her grief as a rebellion. I propose to close read Honig's reframing of Antigone's political significance through language as a form of epistemic resistance in which she carves out a primarily discursive space for a new politics of dissent to take shape in the form of what she terms "agonistic humanism". By coming up with a subversive reading of *Antigone*, Honig's aim is to disrupt the established readings around the play that have solicited Antigone predominantly as a figure for mourning, which in turn has been influential on democratic theory. While arguing for the relevance of epistemic resistance in Honig's radical rewriting of Antigone, I also discuss her critique of Butler's politics, which she claims to have changed from a subversive politics to an increased emphasis on shared vulnerability and lamentation. My aim is to ask whether Honig's project is politically different from Butler's and what this signifies in the overall gesture of rewriting *Antigone* for political thought. I also question whether her proposal to "return to the text", which is Sophocles' *Antigone*, ends up reaffirming the conventionality and conservatism of the Western canon as opposed to examples of canonical counter-discourses and/or the plurality of *Antigone*s around the world in theatre and political thought today.

Honig's reading and rewriting of *Antigone* engages with epistemic resistance at two levels: textual and metatextual. Firstly, on a textual level, Honig explicitly defines her aim as to decentre the burial issue at the heart of Sophocles' play (97). She emphasizes that "the issue may not be whether or not Antigone buries Polynices: "that anemic framing is Creon's *are you with me or against me* way of presenting it. The issue is *how* she does so. Antigone buries Polynices, owns her deed, and sings her final dirge seeking to frame her own and not Creon's understanding of her act for posterity" (174). Therefore, the issue for Honig is how Antigone frames her deed contra Creon. It is a matter of knowledge production within a hegemonic power structure and the epistemic resistance that it gives rise to. It is indeed interesting to note how Honig summarizes Creon's framing as an "*are you with me or against me* way", evoking George W. Bush's similar either/or approach in his famous discourse of "you are either with us or against us" which served to legitimize US occupation of Iraq in 2003 under the name of war against terror[23]. To

[23] For George W. Bush's words after 9/11, "you are either with us or against us", see CNN on 6 November 2001: <https://edition.cnn.com/2001/US/11/06/gen.attack.on.terror/>. Honig's evoking of Bush's either/or approach

interpret Antigone's deed, Honig turns to a contemporary oppressive sovereign discourse of polarizing society in the name of unjust wars, thereby marking her reading of *Antigone* part of her response to the events in her own day. Within Honig's framing then, Antigone and Creon emerge as the fighting discourses of the sovereign and the counter-sovereign from within a very contemporary understanding. Antigone's discourse is an alternative to Creon's, aimed at countering his power, and rewriting the narrative around the deed of burial. According to Honig, Antigone "has embraced the larger ethical and political situation and reformulated it. She performs the burial of Polynices in a way that she hopes will recast the situation" (174). Hence, Honig's Antigone acts from a position of epistemic resistance and agency to reframe the sovereign's discourse by claiming sovereignty for herself.

By decentring the issue of burial in favour of an epistemic reframing of the deed, Honig casts Antigone as "a partisan political actor" (95), who acts to "object to the democratic order of the day" (97). On this textual level, then, Honig's attempt is similar to Butler's in the sense of decentring the burial in favour of Antigone's speech acts which counter the sovereign's discourse epistemically. For both, the importance of Antigone arises from her position as a political actor who first and foremost rebels epistemically. However, Honig's approach is different from Butler's in the way she endorses Antigone as a political actor who claims sovereignty for herself. Butler, on the other hand, acknowledges that Antigone employs the sovereign's discourse to fight against it, which is an example of the performative political power of reiteration. Now that Antigone is deprived of the power mechanism which sustains the sovereign's discourse, her discourse has a subversive effect. Different from Honig's, Butler's Antigone does not claim sovereign power, but mimics and mobilizes the sovereign to disenfranchise him from such powers. In this respect, even though both thinkers argue for a counter-sovereign discourse, they differ in their endorsements of sovereignty when it comes to the figure of Antigone.

The most famous and distinguishing feature of Honig's *Antigone Interrupted* is where she reimagines the deed of burial as an act of conspiracy between the two sisters, Antigone and Ismene. According to Honig, it is a mystery as to why Sophocles chooses to dramatize Antigone burying her brother not once but twice. This mystery is solved when read from a conspirative perspective. As such, the first burial is performed by Ismene secretly at night as befits her private character, whereas the second is performed in pure daylight by Antigone who wails, shouts, and

finds a parallel in Seamus Heaney's *The Burial at Thebes* in Creon's ascension speech: "Whoever isn't for us / Is against us in this case" (3).

gets caught. In Chapter 6, Honig rewrites some lines of the play to make a case for her argument. These are generally some asides that would be anachronistic and unconventional in the context of Greek tragedy. For example, "When Antigone says, 'I cannot deny it,' is she wondering: '*Did someone else bury Polynices before I got there? But who?*'" (160). Or when Antigone reproaches Ismene with her famous "Never share my dying", Honig comments that "We can imagine her saying these words as a cold, demeaning rejection, but we can also hear them said with great tenderness, resignation, and sacrifice" (166). And later, when Ismene protests, "Antigone, sensing the danger, moves to bring her to her senses: "'Ask Creon, your concern is all for him' (549 [619] Is this not a coded way of saying *pssst; he is right here?*" (167). According to Honig, it is Antigone's capacity to use double meanings and dramatic irony that create this alternative reading of the play: "[Antigone] helps Ismene by mastering the opacity for a moment, redeploying it using *adianoeta* to save her sister in a way that makes sense of Antigone's otherwise strange claim that she was born to join in love, and ridding us of the problem, much wrestled with in the literature, that she is inconsistent" (168).

Honig's unorthodox reading of the play and her "genre-bending" (194) utilize the type of meticulous attention commonly seen in detective narratives in which the protagonist eventually reconstructs the plot in such a way that everything suddenly falls into place and unfolds in a new light. The problem with this reading is that it assumes a unified and perfectly structured *Antigone* as written by Sophocles. This assumption is actually based on the critical reception of the play over two millennia and overlooks its fictionality, and the possibility that as a play, it may indeed have gaps and inconsistencies. Even though Honig herself is critical of the reception history of the tragedy, she also ends up essentializing it from within that history. When she comments "But there is another possibility, less thinkable to the Chorus, and less imaginable to audiences through the ages: *what if Ismene did it?*" (161), one cannot help but think what the point is of reading into a play a hidden and so-far unacknowledged deeper truth and intentionality. According to Simon Goldhill, Honig, through "a drastic redrafting of Sophocles' play", ends up replacing one myth with another which offers a Hollywood image of the sisters "who despite their bitter arguments really love each other and would always be there for each other". He criticises Honig for attempting to adjust the tragedy to suit her political theory, emphasizing that her interpretation through agonistic humanism "requires an extraordinary act of wilful reading against the grain". Consequently, he asks, "Can we – should we – avoid finding such self-confirmation in the estrangements of *Antigone*?" (*Sophocles and the Language of Tragedy* 247). Goldhill is sceptical of reading Attic tragedies from within a political agenda as this reduces the

richness of their meaning by erasing the tensions and ambiguities. Consequently, the critique he offers casts rightful doubt upon Honig's claim to *Antigone*'s truth in Sophocles' play.

However, when we consider Honig's reading as a new version, or an adaptation, then it also becomes more meaningful to interpret her approach not as an aberration from an original, but as a counter-canonical challenge to the histories of reception that surround the play, which deserves regard for its own creative scope. As a new version, her "two sisters, two burials" (Honig 161, 163) approach introduces sororal solidarity against Antigone's solitude in Sophocles' play and its reception history, and calls for organized resistance even as it falls short of democratic collective action:

> The sisters do not form a democratic collectivity […] or a feminist solidarity per se. But – on this reading – the sisters care for each other in turn: each guesses at the other's sacrifice in quiet isolation, and each utters the lines and performs the acts that both suit and extend her character. Read in their sororal solidarity, the sisters exhibit a fuller range of virtues, character, desperation, and hope than is discernible to readers who assume Antigone acted alone, which is to say almost all of the play's readers. (170)

With her figures of speech, puns, ironies, asides, and use of *adianoeta*, as well as her introduction of organized resistance with the sisters acting in agonistic concert, Honig's version cites, repeats, and parodies *Antigone* performatively in the sense proposed by Butler as a form of subversion, rebellion, and resistance. On the metatextual level, Honig's attempt at rewriting *Antigone* is an act of epistemic resistance that seeks to mobilize alternative resistant politics via an alternative dramaturgy of Sophocles' play. She claims that many of the original play's dramaturgical qualities were overlooked or sidelined in order to create a humanist/sentimental Antigone who is a representative of a mortalist humanism (89). In contrast to this history of reading *Antigone*, she sets out to unearth a new Antigone, one that conspires and organizes in rebellion, a figure for agonistic humanism and an insurgent politics of lamentation (85), which constitutes her act of epistemic resistance. She wants to decentre the politics of mortality and lamentation at the heart of the modern interpretive work on Antigone as part of her political project, in which a figure like Antigone can play another meaningful part. In Honig's agonistic humanism, Antigone mobilizes her mourning politically so that her other qualities, such as her "rivalry, violence, vengeance, promising, forgiveness, plotting, and conspiracy" (30) can be underscored. Honig's aim here is to "better inspire progressive democratic imaginations" (30).

Honig is critical of a humanism making a comeback in recent years in the form of a mortalism that asserts what is common to all humans is vulnerability to suffering. She relates this situation to an ethical turn in theory, for which she thinks Butler became a representative (18). As opposed to a politics of mourning epitomized by Butler, she sets out to politicize mourning through life affirming qualities that she finds in Sophocles' tragedy. She comments that

> In reading after reading, staging after staging, Antigone represents grief for ungrievable life or solitary conscience rising up against arrogant power, though she could – and sometimes with better textual exegesis *should* – represent the dissident quest for sovereignty or sororal solidarity, or the autonomy of aristocratic life opposed to appropriation by or complicity with the new democratic polis. (19)

Honig's alternative is an agonistic humanism that does not only draw on mortality and suffering but also and more predominantly on the positive qualities around natality, pleasure, power, desire, and *thumos*. For her, Antigone is neither just a figure for resistance nor just a lamenter, but she also represents vengeance, politics and a quest for sovereignty (19). Therefore, for Honig, the question becomes how to rethink and reverse the relationship between lamentation and politics, where lamentation always seems to be prior to or above politics, and how to politicise lamentation radically through both the figure of Antigone and *Antigone*, the play, and its dramaturgy. The difference, for Honig, becomes one of emphasis between "a politics of *lamentation* premised on shared finitude", which she finds in Butler, and "an insurgent *politics* of lamentation that solicits out of us a potentially shared natality", which she endorses (85). Honig brings about the concept of natality as it is taken up by Hannah Arendt alongside "action" as opposed to Butler's emphasis on grievability. For Honig, "the idea is to treat lamentation as a kind of performative utterance" (89), which I have argued to be part of what Butler did in *Antigone's Claim*, as well as her overall work.

Honig criticizes Butler for having altered her attitude vis a vis *Antigone* from *Antigone's Claim* (2000) to *Precarious Life* (2004) written in a post-9/11 context. According to Honig, there is a shift from an emphasis on Antigone's claim to sovereignty to "a lamentation of sovereignty's excesses on behalf of a (post)politics or ethics premised on human commonalities of vulnerability and mortality" (45). Hence, she claims that Butler moves from politics to an ethics of lamentation (46). In her earlier work, Honig thinks Butler's Antigone is characterized by her quest for sovereignty and the way she appropriates the sovereign's speech in a subversive way. However, in the latter work, according to Honig, Butler is culpable of a totalizing humanism in her emphasis on vulnerability as the common ground for humanity even if the word is often put

in quotes. Honig claims that "[t]he second endorses a more universalist humanist ethics of lamentation in which the focus is on suffering. Sensitivity to shared vulnerability and exposure, Butler argues, can move us to cross the merely political lines of friend/enemy and inspire us to treat *all* lives as grievable and human" (42). Honig's criticism of Butler can be summarized under three themes: (1) assuming a universalist humanism, (2) mortality as opposed to natality and action, and (3) moving away from politics toward ethics. However, these three points are more relevant to *Precarious Life*, and analysis of her later work, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (2015) challenge this view even though both works (along with her other works) do insist on an ethical understanding of politics.

In writing about shared vulnerability in *Precarious Life*, Butler is highly sceptical about a universal definition of what is human. On the contrary, "the question of the human" or who counts as human is her departure point, and she immediately emphasizes that there is no universally shared human condition after all (20). In contrast to universalism, she questions how the human is differentially produced, and even though vulnerability, loss, and mourning are common to all, how and why this condition is unequally distributed across the globe and the possible politics at stake there (xii). Butler's idea here is that grievability also determines who counts as human. She comments, "Some lives are grievable, and others are not; the differential allocation of grievability that decides what kind of subject is and must be grieved, and which kind of subject must not, operates to produce and maintain certain exclusionary conceptions of who is normatively human: what counts as a livable life and a grievable death?" (xiv-xv). Therefore, Butler's task is to question what can be made of grief politically (xii) while acknowledging that grief is generally regarded to be privatizing and depoliticising (22). Butler's emphasis is also important in this context because it counters Honig's claim that the idea of a liveable life is absent from *Precarious Life* (Honig 44). In that sense, Butler is not exclusively interested in mortality as opposed to natality, but she uses the concept to scrutinize the forms of recognition around the concept of the human in their mortality and vulnerability.

In *Precarious Life*, Butler refers to *Antigone* twice in the same chapter "Violence, Mourning, Politics" in relation to her discussion on ungrievable lives. *Antigone* emerges as an example after Butler mentions *San Francisco Chronicle*'s refusal to publish the obituaries of two Palestinian families killed by Israeli troops. She argues that this failure to mark the deaths with obituaries dehumanises the victims and takes away their value or dignity, and she likens this to Creon's prohibition of the public act of grieving (35-36). Later, she returns to the figure of Antigone as

exemplary of grieving ungrievable lives: "Antigone, risking death herself by burying her brother against the edict of Creon, exemplified the political risks in defying the ban against public grief during times of increased sovereign power and hegemonic national unity" (46). In contrast to *Antigone's Claim*, a discussion of *Antigone* is neither central nor part of the argument in *Precarious Life*. Yet, the two works are linked through the thematization of not only grievability, but also the insistent appearance of the less than human in the public sphere as an agent for lamentation, how their claim against sovereign power also conditions their subjectivity, and the subversive politics that this gives rise to. In "Violence, Mourning, Politics", Butler questions the understanding of the "subject" as a precondition for political agency, which is linked to her prior discussions on how the subject is formed through interpellation and acting. She ends her essay on a note on collective resistance by underscoring the dependency and relationality between political agents (40), which – contra Honig – signals that she is still emphasizing political action and questioning how to resist politically.

Yet, ethics is still central to Butler's thought. Both in *Precarious Life* and in *Notes*, she endorses a form of Levinasian ethics of the face, marking the claim the Other makes upon the subject, constituting them and making a demand on them to take responsibility toward that Other. However, Butler's is an ethics for politics and a political ethics at the same time. In "Can the Palestinian Antigone Grieve?", Andrés Fabián Henao Castro underscores the importance of Honig's version of sororal conspiracy; yet he is critical of her idea of an ethical turn in Butler, positing "ethics as a kind of pre-political ontological ground", whereas ethics and politics have always been co-implicated in Butler's theorizing (100). Instead, he finds Butler's approach as what "happens when subjects contest (political) the denial of their equality, whenever their vulnerability to loss (ethical) is undermined by a social order that, for instance, interdicts their mourning" (99). Instead of moving from politics to ethics, Castro claims that Butler moves "to a more radical critique of the more violent disqualification of speech-acts from the public sphere under geo-political conditions of settler colonialism" (96), and that Honig disregards the subject positionality of this change, which becomes prominent through Butler's discussion of the rejected Palestinian obituaries. Castro uses the concept of "social death" that links the ungrievable Palestinian lives and Antigone in Butler's work. I agree with Castro's critique as it portrays how the ethical is always already political and vice versa in Butler's work.

Contrary to Honig's concern that in time Butler's oeuvre evolves from a politics of counter-sovereignty to that of shared suffering and inaction, Butler's positionality vis a vis

politics becomes even more marked in her open discussion of this subject in *Notes* (21), where the performative politics she gives voice to in *Antigone's Claim* are both revisited and developed. An example of this is when Butler points out that those who are excluded from the public sphere act in spite of their exclusion (81), which is parallel to her former discussion of *Antigone*. However, this time Butler revisits this theme with a mind to collective resistance and how alliances are formed between precarious groups, and how these groups mobilize their vulnerability for resistance. In *Notes*, Butler also returns to the topic of ethics and talks about "the ethics of cohabitation", where she links her take on Levinas and Arendt with her understanding of the precarious life; but again, it is the ethics of politics that is of interest to her. She explicates what to Honig seems like a depoliticization of her performative theory when she addresses her move from a theory of gender performativity to precariousness. She underscores that while in *Gender Trouble* she explored how "certain acts could perform or could have a subversive effect on gender norms", now she is concerned with how precarity becomes a common ground to mobilize political alliances between diverse groups of people (26-27). In that sense, Butler employs a performative understanding of precarity, one that moves from being an ontological status to being a constitutive act, giving rise to subjectivities along the way. Therefore, in *Notes* she further clarifies the political activism that gets invented through her discussion of precariousness and vulnerability, which links to her discussion of performativity in diverse ways.

Honig's approach is not essentially different from Butler's reading in terms of speech acts and performativity; however, she comes up with a completely distinct version of *Antigone* in her interpretation through sororal conspiracy. Her task is less unearthing the overlooked qualities in Sophocles' play than coming up with a new *Antigone* that can be representative of her political agenda. In that respect, Sophocles' play gives her a recurrent theme in political theory that aligns with her feminist politics and helps her resist the epistemological frameworks that surround these works. Toward the end of her book, Honig acknowledges that she presents an intentionalist reading of *Antigone*: "If I have in my readings attributed to her a variety of possible motivations, hidden thoughts, and strategies, that is because reimagining the play this way seemed to help make room for new readings that might rival older, more established ones" (188). Moreover, in response to Goldhill's criticism of her "extra-ordinary act of wilful reading against the grain", Honig refers to Sara Ahmed's feminist call for wilfulness and comments that "the reading presented here is wilful – pressing its case forward against other rivals, trying to make room for itself, amassing the evidence, seeking to reach beyond the established structures

and figures of language, pluralizing them and the genres of reception" (189). Therefore, Honig's intentionalist or wilful reading is indeed a new version of *Antigone* within political theory.

Starting the Conclusion to *Antigone, Interrupted* with an epitaph from Italo Calvino that goes "Every reading of a classic is in fact a rereading", Honig thinks new readings both exemplify new demands of reality and expose old demands of reality as exemplified by prior readings (190). New readings rework not only the play, but also "the palimpsests of reception that frame, secure, and limit our Antigonean inheritances (191). For Honig, there is a double bind at reworking the text: On the one hand, she does not believe in the possibility or necessity of a return to an originary text, and she finds the engagement with the prior readings fruitful. On the other hand, she is interested in finding the resistances within the classical text against its established readings. In this regard, Honig sees her own engagement as conspiring with the text to argue for a new Antigone that not just resists, but also quests for sovereignty. Another striking comment Honig makes along these lines is when she underscores how the central question of the play changes:

> How to bury Polynices is the central question for Sophocles' title character, but it need not be seen as the central question for the play's audience and readers. Instead the central questions for us, surely, are: how should we bury Polynices, Antigone, Eurydice, Eteocles, and Haemon? […] That is, rather than staging the question of how should the polis treat a traitor, Sophocles' *Antigone* can be seen to ask: how should the polis treat others (from traitor to polis hero, from dissident resister to mourning mother) in life and in death? (192-193)

The problem that arises in this excerpt is the question of audiences and readers. Who are "we" and who are "others"? Are there transhistorical audiences and readers that are likely to interpret this play in such a way as suggested here? Or does Honig have today's Western academia in mind when she mentions "audience and readers"? What does Honig mean by "polis"? Why should such a concept be relevant to contemporary audiences? Instead of there being a shift in the central question of the play from the play's "title character" to the play's "audience" (a collective singular) and "readers" (individual plurals), I propose another possibility: What if the central question of the play shifts in Honig's particular reading, the way it has always already been shifted in each reworking? Indeed, Honig comes up with a unique version of the play, of which she is also aware. She accepts that her project not only recrafts or reinterprets Antigone (character and play), but such a recrafting necessarily involves "re-emplotment and genre-bending, as well" and her list of other genres than tragedy include "detectival mystery, comedy, and *Trauerspiel*, and most of all, melodrama, the genre of plot, conspiracy, paranoia, and

embodiment" (194). So, why does Honig not name her "rereading" a new version, or an adaptation, as it is? Does not Honig's genre-bending extend to democratic theory where it already belongs? In a discussion about the melodramatization of *Antigone* by Fassbinder in *Germany in Autumn*, it is Honig who comments that "the idea of genre-switching, pressed on us by melodrama's seemingly odd reemplotments of political struggles, may help us reach beyond the battle of the brothers" (82). In that respect, Honig also engages in genre-switching or genre-bending in coming up with her own adaptation or new version of *Antigone* in political theory.

By resisting the established meanings around Sophocles' play, Honig's attempt resembles various theatrical adaptations that mobilize *Antigone* for collective rebellion. In some recent reworkings of the tragedy, such as Colm Tóibín's *Pale Sister*, Stacey Gregg's *Ismene*, Inua Ellams' *Antigone*, Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire*, and Şahika Tekand's *Eurydice' Cry*, there is an increased emphasis on the figure of Ismene and the sororal solidarity or organized action of Ismene and Antigone, some of which may be influenced by Honig's assertive reading. With a mind to epistemic resistance, Honig's addition to the play is challenging the isolation that often accompanies reading Antigone as a figure of rebellion and/or resistance, which is also one of the criticisms Honig has in store for Butler. Yet, she claims that this Antigone already exists as a potential in Sophocles' work and locates her own reading within reception studies concerning this work. However, the way Honig rewrites the relationship between the sisters as a conspirative political rebellion, with its own pragmatic and political agenda that goes beyond the burial of the brother, transcends reception and becomes a new version of the play in itself to such an extent that one wonders, why does she even need the legitimation of Sophocles' play when she could just claim the originality of her own approach by rewriting it just as the many 20th and 21st century theatre adaptations did? As she insists that the conspiracy of the sisters potentially exists in the dramaturgy of the play, she is still talking about Sophocles' play even though she does not believe in any reading of the play free from the constraints of its reception history. Instead of directly engaging in a creative dialogue with *Antigone*s in their historical and global multiplicity, she chooses to prioritize Sophocles' *Antigone* as the original model for political thought, thereby involuntarily sidelining various political reimaginings – especially decolonial or Global South versions – as secondary or subordinate[24]. In response to Butler and Honig's re-readings/rewritings of *Antigone* from within political theory to make space for resistant politics, I propose to rethink Antigone's liminal status from a contemporary political point of view in

[24] Honig mentions two contemporary adaptations / new versions of Antigone in her book: Griselda Gambaro's *Antigona Furiosa* and the film *Germany in Autumn*. Among these two, Gambaro's play is from the Global South; however, it is only discussed in terms of how it is taken up in Diana Taylor's criticism and not as a play in itself.

relation to the disenfranchised today, such as women, the youth, the urban poor, immigrants, refugees, and the undocumented that have been taken up by the various new versions of *Antigone* that form the next chapters of this dissertation.

Chapter II

Britain's *Metics*: Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* and Inua Ellams' *Antigone*

Britain, especially London with its vibrant theatre landscape, stands out as one of the most productive places in staging new versions of *Antigone* in the 21st century[25]. Recent productions have strong resonances with contemporary politics around the globe, especially post-9/11 occupations and wars in the Middle East. In 2010, *Welcome to Thebes*, a National Theatre production written by Moira Buffini and directed by Richard Eyre alluded to contemporary wars while making use of Greek myths including Antigone. In 2011, Sophocles' *Antigone*, translated by Timberlake Wertenbaker and directed by Tom Littler at the Southwark Playhouse, was set in a generic Middle Eastern setting. In 2012, National Theatre's production of Sophocles' *Antigone*, in a new translation by Don Taylor and directed by Polly Findlay was immediately resonant with the recent war in Iraq. In 2015, another big production was Ivo van Hove's direction of Anne Carson's translation of *Antigone* starring Juliette Binoche at the Barbican as part of an international production. In 2017, Christopher Adams' *Antigone*, directed by Tamsin Shasha and produced by Actors of Dionysus, was set in a dystopian world marked by drones and coding, and it was suggestive of Middle Eastern war zones. Finally, in 2022, Inua Ellams' rewriting of *Antigone*, directed by Max Webster and Jo Tyabji at the Regent's Open Air Theatre dealt with the effects of the war in the Middle East on Britain's Muslim populations.

Different from these examples, Rukhsana Ahmad's *River on Fire* (2001) directed by Helena Uren and produced by Kali Theatre Company at the Lyric Hammersmith reimagined *Antigone* in the South Asian context of 1992 Bombay riots. With the rise of anti-racist movements such as Black Lives Matter, *Antigone*s featuring an all-Black cast or dealing with racism also came to the forefront. Roy Williams' *Antigone* (2014) at the Derby Theatre and York Theatre Royal had an all-Black cast and reimagined the play taking place within a Black street gang. Roy Alexander Weise's production of Seamus Heaney's *The Burial at Thebes* with an all-Black cast was announced at Lyric Hammersmith Theatre for April 2020, but it got cancelled

[25] According to the APGRD database, 63 adaptations of *Antigone* appeared in England between 2000 and 2020. The list may not be exhaustive as it does not go beyond 2020 and only includes staged plays.

due to the Covid-19 lockdown. In Hollie McNish's *Antigone*, directed by Natasha Rickman at the Storyhouse (2021), Black actors played the parts of Antigone, Ismene and Tiresias. The British production of Merlynn Tong's *Antigone* at Mercury Theatre, Colchester, directed by Dawn Walton (2021), had Black and multi-race cast and made use of projected videos from Black Lives Matter and civil rights campaigns at the background. A third prominent theme has been women's liberation, which found its contemporary resonances from feminist movements such as #metoo and women's rallies against violence in Britain during the pandemic. Lulu Raczka's *Antigone* (2020), a two-hander directed by Ali Pidsley at the New Diorama Theatre, was an extended dialogue between two sisters, Antigone and Ismene. Merlynn Tong's *Antigone* also had a female Creon as queen. In 2022, Colm Tóibín's *Pale Sister* was revived and adapted to screen for the BBC 4's Lights Up season during the lockdown after its Irish production (2022).

Among these productions, Ivo van Hove's[26] and Polly Findlay's[27] plays were not only the most famous, but they were also exemplary in terms of reflecting how mainstream theatres engaged with Sophocles' *Antigone* as a contemporary political play. They were performed in a new translation in contrast to new versions, such as Inua Ellams' that reimagine and recontextualize *Antigone* with an explicit emphasis on epistemic resistance. These works modernize the tragedy through costume, set design, props, use of chorus, and choice of words and emphasis in the play text. The set designs, with their choice of colour and light, are suggestive of modern war bunkers. The setting is a modernized Thebes; the characters correspond to those of Sophocles, and there is a Chorus. However, instead of having a separate Chorus of elderly Theban men, they make use of an economy of actors by having them act both individual parts and the Chorus simultaneously. The scripts radically modernize Sophocles' text, generally both simplifying its language and adding in modern references. According to Binoche, Carson's translation reveals a text that is "pared back, 'bones and skin'" (Binoche and Hove). This comment emphasizes a willingness to get to an idealized gist of tragedy that would typify a human condition, as Binoche's other comment gives away in the words, "It's the myths, it's the archetypes, it's what we're made of" (Binoche and Hove). Likewise, according to Findlay, Greek plays "are still what form our imaginative DNA. The stories in those plays form the building

[26] *Antigone* by Sophocles in a new translation by Anne Carson opened in Luxembourg, on 25 February 2015, [at Grand Théâtre de Luxembourg] and subsequently London, on 5 March 2015, at the Barbican Theatre, starring Juliette Binoche under Ivo van Hove's direction. (Carson 11).

[27] *Antigone* by Sophocles in a new translation by Dan Taylor opened at the National Theatre, London on 23 May 2012, starring Jodie Whittaker and Christopher Eccleston. The play is also streamed on the theatre's online platform, National Theatre at Home.

blocks of our imagination […] In a way, what's fabulous about the plays is how timeless they are, so *Antigone* felt like the great underdog movie" (Findlay, Swift). By staging *Antigone* in a world shaken by new wars with its own unburied dead, the productions emphasize the "timelessness" or "universality" of Greek tragedy, and thus they also give the contemporary world a chance to think critically as to how they engage with these themes. The emphasis is on inspiring democratic ideals and affects such as pathos, catharsis and compassion in the audience. However, they overlook how the idea of the "timelessness" or "universality" of Greek tragedy has its own history which is deeply implicated in Western thought. In *Sophocles and the Language of Tragedy,* Simon Goldhill analyses in detail how German Idealism since Kant has privileged Greek tragedy as the "ideal", "timeless", and "universal", which is both radically different to how tragedy was understood in Athens in the 5th century BC, and complicit with the rise of nationalism and a Christianized version of reading tragedy and history (149-151). These productions inadvertently follow the German Idealist tendency to read Greek tragedy as part of modernity's self-definition around certain values, in which Europe is perceived as the historical successor of ancient Greece and these values have been assumed to have carried on trans-historically.

The productions also introduce some contemporary interpretations into the play that rewrite the understanding of defiance and resistance. Ivo van Hove describes the protagonist as follows: "Antigone is defiance personified: she is 'No!'. By following her heart, she destroys an entire nation. Sophocles' *Antigone* is as explosive as a nuclear bomb. It is an exploration of good and evil which delves into the workings of the human mind in a crisis. Antigone demonstrates how very unreasonable reason can be" (Hove). Presenting Antigone as someone who follows her heart and destroys nations like a nuclear bomb evokes the Enlightenment binary between reason and emotion which not only prioritizes reason but also associates it with what is good, the one that does not explode nuclear bombs and erases nations. Ironically, this has not historically been the case in Hiroshima where the United States, under the Western values of rationalism, liberty and democracy, dropped the nuclear bomb. Even though Hove is clearly sceptical of reason as such, underlining "how unreasonable reason can be", in the last analysis, Antigone still represents the unreasonable, the irrational, the emotive, which brings her closer to the modern figure of the terrorist. If Antigone, as the destroyer of nations, is defiance personified for Hove, then it also means that defiance brings catastrophe, which inadvertently erases the conditions of possibility for political resistance. Similarly, Polly Findlay, described Antigone as a "no goodie", similar to "a member of the Baader-Meinhof gang" or "a 9/11 bomber". She explained: "I don't mean that glibly. What I mean is that her belief system is very

clear. She's frightened by what she does, but feels she has no option. She is prepared to commit a crime against the prevailing social order to fulfil a moral obligation. She knows she'll be seen as a terrorist" (Findlay, "Muscles, magic and suicide bombers"). So, in Findlay's terms, fulfilling a moral order can be a crime that amounts to terrorism, and Antigone, in her stubbornness to put an idealized moral order into practice, becomes the terrorist of the modern world. However, the association of defiance with destruction or terrorism runs the risk of criminalizing political dissent and reaffirming the violence exerted by political power structures in the world.

Instead of seeing this theme of the terrorist informed by an idealized timelessness and universality of the tragic art form, I propose to look more closely at what this introduction of the figure of the terrorist brings to the table in reworking *Antigone* in the West. First of all, after 9/11, in the mainstream imaginary of the contemporary West, it looks like the "suicide bomber" has increasingly become the figure of the Middle Eastern Islamist religious extremist even though domestic right-wing extremism has also been defined as a threat. In *Necropolitics*, Achille Mbembe locates this shift in the object of enmity, i.e., the terrifying object of desire in the contemporary era as having shifted from yesterday's favoured names "Negro" and "Jew" to "Islam, the Muslim, the Arab, the foreigner, the immigrant, the refugee" (43). Even though Findlay's production does not make use of Muslim characters or refer to the war and occupation in Iraq and Afghanistan openly, the set and the overtones of the play are filled with allusions to the West's "war against terrorism" in the Middle East. This was clearly marked by the opening scene of the play that revived the famous photograph from the White House depicting Barrack Obama, Hillary Clinton and others watching the capture and killing of Osama bin Laden. Findlay achieved this effect by adding a scene to the play from the background story of the battle between Eteocles and Polyneices being watched on a TV screen in the war bunker. In *Tragedy Since 9/11*, Jennifer Wallace draws attention to how "[t]he central subject of the event –Osama bin Laden himself—is missing from the photograph" and that Findlay's production, by making use of this photographic technique, "made strikingly visible the invisibility of one of the great 'enemies' of our time" (77). Yet, what is still striking in this *tableau vivant* is that the invisibility persists; the perspective of the "invisible", inscrutable, and incomprehensible centre is still missing from representation in Findlay's play. Findlay and Hove's words demonstrate that when it comes to the figure of Antigone, the attempt is not to understand her in the complexity of her deed, but to equate her with symbols associated with violence in the mainstream public imagination. The parallelism in the Western imaginary comes from the inscrutability attributed to

terrorism and feeds into the narrative of the inscrutability of Antigone's action discussed in the previous chapters.

In contrast to the mainstream Western approach to associate Antigone with the figure of the "terrorist", two recent works turn toward Sophocles' play to nuance this equation and question how this understanding of terrorism has been instrumental in the epistemic injustice suffered by Muslim populations living in the West, and more particularly in Britain: Kamila Shamsie's novel *Home Fire* (2017) and Inua Ellams' play *Antigone* (2022). Written by two immigrant writers, who recently acquired citizenship status in the UK, these works reflect on the politics of immigration and citizenship by putting *Antigone* into use through the very recent debates around the revoking of citizenship by the British Home Office. They both evoke the theme of the denial of burial to Polyneices' body in Sophocles' *Antigone* to discuss how death gets to be instrumentalized in the contemporary world, and necropower is exerted to govern populations and assert state sovereignty. Set in contemporary London, both works bring *Antigone* closer home by scrutinizing what it means to be British and Muslim at the same time, the condition of possibility and challenges inherent in this positionality for immigrant communities, and how the worlds of identity and belonging are defined by necropolitics while at the same time carving out an epistemic space for silenced narratives vulnerable to state hostility, and thus advocating for epistemic resistance.

What Shamsie and Ellams set out to do is radically different from the previous examples by Findlay and Hove. In contrast to claims of timelessness and universality, Shamsie and Ellams respond to *Antigone* in its historicity by re-historicising the play and getting into an intertextual relationship with the classical work. They do not interpret the conditions under which Sophocles' or their *Antigone*s exist as either timeless or universal, on the contrary, they look into the very uniquely historical conditions under which histories of conflict, oppression, and rebellion get to be repeated albeit in their particularity and difference. Consequently, they get to scrutinize not only the conditions that reproduce violence historically, but they also look for ways to change this structure of oppression through putting the historical and canonical figure of Antigone into use. For them, Antigone is not a destructive force in the universe having emanations in the figure of suicide bombers or nuclear bombs; but they mobilize the conflict between Creon and Antigone as interpreted from the framework of a civic structure, i.e., Athenian democracy, to shed light on a discussion about the civic structure in their society today. Therefore, their concern is not purely centred on the figure of Antigone, but they are more

interested in the politics, the state, and the society that create the conditions for Antigone to re-emerge and how this structure might be reversed. In that regard, different from the modernist understanding of tragedy rooted in German Idealism that Goldhill also emphasized that has "a heightened focus on the individual subject as a locus of tragedy" (Goldhill, "The Ends of Tragedy" 233-234), Shamsie and Ellams shift the emphasis back to the idea of community, which is also central to Attic tragedies.

2. 1. Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire*

Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017) stands out from the theatre plays analysed in this thesis in terms of genre. Even though *Antigone* has been reworked in the contemporary novel many times[28], Shamsie's book and Joydeep Roy-Bhattacharya's *The Watch* (2012) are two that directly adapt *Antigone* as a novel by reimagining and resituating its plot in the 21st century and related to post-9/11 politics. While Shamsie's novel is mainly set in contemporary Britain, Bhattacharya's *The Watch* is set around a US Army Base in Kandahar, Afghanistan during US' war against Taliban. Bhattacharya's narrative is also different from the new versions of *Antigone* with a mind to epistemic resistance in the sense that he mainly gives voice to the narratives of the US military sources and shows sympathy with them. In contrast, the other voices, such as Nizam, the Antigone figure represented as a disabled Pashtun woman in demand of her brother's dead body from the American soldiers, or Masood, the Americans' interpreter and a male Ismene figure in the novel, fade into the background.

Home Fire revisits Sophocles' *Antigone* through contemporary sources (*Home Fire*, Acknowledgements 263-264) such as Anne Carson's *Antigone* (2015) and Seamus Heaney's *The Burial at Thebes* (2004). These versions stand out for their choice of a condensed and modern poetic vocabulary resonant with contemporary political events. Shamsie, like Binoche, describes

[28] Even though *Antigone* is not adapted as widely in the novel as it is in theatre, there are still quite a few novels that present a new take on *Antigone*, especially in the 21st century. Some of these novelize the ancient myth, such as Henry Bauchau's *Antigone* (1997), Natalie Haynes' *The Children of Jocasta* (2017), Ali Smith's *The Story of Antigone* (2019), and Carlo Gébler's *I, Antigone* (2021). These novels have strong modern resonances, yet the narrative is still based on the story of Antigone set in ancient Thebes. There are also novels that do not rewrite *Antigone* but make use of Sophocles' tragedy as a leitmotif that informs the main action and politics of the narrative which is set in the contemporary world, such as Sorj Chalandon's *Le Quatrieme Mur* (2013), where the plot revolves around putting on a performance of Anouilh's *Antigone* during the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1982), and Hubert Haddad's *Palestine* (2015), in which the storyline implicitly alludes to *Antigone* by playing around the similarity/fraternity of enemy soldiers and the figure of the resistant sister in the context of the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

Carson's translation as particularly "pared down" (Shamsie, "I don't know who I'd be if I wasn't a writer"). Carson's choice of vocabulary, in addition to her condensed poetics, highly resonate with the contemporary political implications of Shamsie' work, such as the Guard referring to the corpse as "illegal" (25), Kreon calling Antigone "you greedy pissant little amateur terrorist" (22) or mentioning "patriot and traitor" (29), as well as his comments such as "[Antigone's] privileges on earth are revoked" (40), which is quite similar to Shamsie's theme of Britain's revoking of citizenship status. A quotation from Heaney's *The Burial at Thebes* is the epigraph of the novel: "The ones we love… are enemies of the state", foreshadowing that the novel will be more relevant for the modern state and its politics than the ancient polis. Heaney's version itself is full of references to contemporary politics from the conflicts in Northern Ireland to the US "war on terror". He describes his approach to the translation process saying, "Creon turns Polyneices into a non-person, in much the same way as the first internees in Northern Ireland and the recent prisoners in Guantanamo Bay were turned into non-persons" (Heaney, "The Jayne Lecture" 422). His Antigone quotes Creon evoking George W. Bush[29]: "'I'll flush 'em out' he says. / 'Whoever isn't for us / Is against us in this case" (Heaney, *The Burial at Thebes* 3). Starting from the epigraph, Heaney's contemporary take on *Antigone* in terms of both the local Irish and international, post 9/11 response to the Middle East provides a useful lens for Shamsie to rework the tragedy.

Apart from versions of *Antigone*, Gillian Slovo's verbatim theatre play *Another World: How We Lost Our Children to Islamic State* has a central role for Shamsie's work. The play gives voice to a multiplicity of viewpoints, from IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi to US Marine Corps General John Allen, UK Government Officials, Metropolitan Police Commissioner Helen Ball, to mothers of young people who have left for Syria from western Europe, to Sixth form students, academics, journalists, activists, lawyers, and educations advisors. It portrays what has been going on with young people being groomed by IS and how the state policies only promised enmity instead of a chance for reintegration for them (Slovo 9, 31).

In addition to these books, Shamsie alludes to cinema and TV films along with their soundtracks. In her talk at the APGRD and her subsequent article, Naomi Weiss draws attention to how Shamsie's novel refers to the two-part TV drama, *The Britz*, written and directed by Peter

[29] George W. Bush's original comments after 9/11 were "We're going to smoke them out" as ("Terror in America") as quoted in *The New York Times* on 21 September 2001. <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/09/19/news/terror-in-america-were-going-to-smoke-them-out-president-airs-his-anger.html>; and "you are either with us or against us" as quoted in CNN on 6 November 2001. <https://edition.cnn.com/2001/US/11/06/gen.attack.on.terror/>

Kosminsky and broadcast on Channel 4 in 2007. *The Britz* features two siblings drawn in opposite directions as a result of Britain's anti-terror laws following 9/11. While the brother, Sohail, joins MI5, the sister, Nasima is radicalized and plans a suicide attack in London. In the end, Sohail comes across his sister in his search for the suicide bomber, but Nasima activates her bomb, and the screen goes black. With the implied death of Sohail and Nasima in the suicide attack, the siblings end up in a similar way to Aneeka and Eamonn in *Home Fire*. Weiss underscores the influence of *The Britz* on *Home Fire* in terms of not only its ending, but also the theme of desire embedded in sibling dynamics. Yet, Weiss misses the point that both works in fact allude to the same Bollywood romantic thriller, *Dil Se* (1998), directed by Mani Ratnam. A very famous pop song from the soundtrack of the film, "Chaiyya Chaiyya", composed by A. R. Rahman and with lyrics written in Urdu by the poet Gulzar, also features in *Home Fire* when Eamonn, in his attempt to learn Urdu, looks up the video clip from the movie and the song's lyrics (87). *Dil Se*, meaning "From the Heart" in Hindi, is about the impossible union of two-lovers as the Kashmiri conflict unfolds at the background. In the similar final scene, Moina, a former rape victim of the Indian army plans a suicide attack and is killed with her lover Amar as they are locked in an embrace, and the bomb explodes. As *Home Fire*'s melodramatic ending indubitably pays homage to this Bollywood film, it also culturally redefines the tragedy in the light of the political conflicts in India and Pakistan.

Shamsie's *Home Fire* is an immediately political novel, touching upon burning hot political debates -especially concerning those related to home affairs in the UK today and their entanglement with world affairs as a result of long-standing imperialist politics. The novel centers around the tragedy of third-generation Pakistani-British Muslims as they grapple with belonging and identity in their north London setting. The main characters are the Pasha siblings; the twins, 19-year-old Aneeka and Parvaiz as raised by their elder sister Isma after both their mother and grandmother die. In the background is the history of their absentee jihadist father, Adil Pasha, who was killed after being tortured in Bagram prison, Afghanistan, as he was being deported to Guantanamo. The novel opens with Isma being interrogated by the police at Heathrow Airport, London, as she is heading to a PhD in Sociology in Amherst, Massachusetts, US. In Amherst, Isma meets and makes friends with Eamonn, whom she recognizes as the son of a Pakistani-British Tory politician, Karamat Lone. Lone is notorious among the Muslim community in Wembley, London, where they have grown up, because he is perceived as someone who betrayed his heritage to rise in politics. Karamat becomes Britain's first Pakistani-British Home Secretary and one of the first things he sets out to do is to revoke the citizenship

of those who work against Britain by joining terrorist organizations such as the Islamic State (henceforth IS). In the meantime, Parvaiz Pasha has also been recruited by IS and left for Raqqa, Syria to work in their media branch. However, he is soon disillusioned and wants to come back home. Aneeka, a law student, decides to seek help by pursuing a romantic relationship with Eamonn. However, Parvaiz is killed in Istanbul while trying to flee IS militants and return to the UK. Karamat declares that Parvaiz's citizenship is revoked; his body cannot be repatriated and will be taken to Pakistan instead. Aneeka travels to Karachi, Pakistan to start a protest, sitting in front of the British Deputy High Commission with her brother's open coffin next to her. Eamonn decides to join and support Aneeka. Eamonn sets off for Karachi while Karamat, confronted by his wife Terry, decides to set things right, but he is too late. Eamonn walks toward Aneeka, he is trapped by a man who locks a suicide vest around him. Aneeka runs towards Eamonn as the vest is about to explode and the novel ends as the lovers embrace.

2. 2. Inua Ellams' *Antigone*

Inua Ellams' *Antigone* ran at the Regent's Open Air Theatre in London as the theatre's final play of the open air season in September 2022. The reviews *Antigone* received criticised its densely packed plot for trying to accommodate a lot of political issues in the limited scope of one single play[30]. At the same time, some praised its poetic tone[31] and the contemporary perspective it brought to adapting a classical tragedy[32]. The play was applauded mostly around its performative elements[33]: the innovative directing by Max Webster and Jo Tyabji, music by Michael 'Mikey J' Asante MBE, and choreography by Carrie-Anne Ingrouille, as well as the acting performances by the lead actors Zainab Hassan (Antigone) and Tony Jayawardena (Creon). *Antigone* demonstrates how a theatre play can reinvent the classical tragedy performatively and through the chorus' adoption of music and dance (hip-hop), and the recreation of tragedy's ritualistic dimension in the representation of Islamic religious practices[34].

[30] See reviews by Clive Davis in *The Times*, Arifa Akbar in *The Guardian*, Natasha Tripney in *Evening Standard*, Alice Saville in *Time Out*, Sam Marlowe in *The Stage*, Matt Wolf in *London Theatre*, Caroline David in *Ham & High*.
[31] See reviews by Sarah Hemming in *Financial Times* and Sam Marlowe in *The Stage*.
[32] See reviews by Dominic Cavendish in *The Telegraph*, Chris Selman in *Gay Times*, Liam O'Dell in his personal blog, Lauren Crisp in *City A.M.*, Caroline David in *Ham & High*, Neil Dowden in *Plays International*.
[33] See reviews by Clive Davis in *The Times*, Arifa Akbar in *The Guardian*, Sarah Hemming in *Financial Times*, Alice Saville in *Time Out*, Sam Marlowe in *The Stage*, Matt Wolf in *London Theatre*, Chris Dobson in *The Understudy*, Liam O'Dell in his personal blog.
[34] Reviews by Arifa Akbar in *The Guardian*, Natasha Tripney in *Evening Standard* and Chris Selman in *Gay Times* make a special reference on the element of ritual.

Ellams' *Antigone* is set in contemporary London and engages directly with current political problems starting from a local level and expanding into wider politics. The play is centred around the British-Pakistani siblings; Antigone, Ismene, Polyneices and Eteocles and opens with Antigone's soliloquy addressing her community of young people at The Queen Elizabeth Youth Centre in London when the centre has to close down due to the government's austerity measures. The siblings have spent their teenage years in this youth centre, which is a meeting point for London's diverse youth living in impoverished districts. Their uncle Creon is the Home Secretary; Haemon, his stepson and Antigone's fiancé is his publicist; Ismene is his political aide, and Eteocles is a police officer. In Scene 2, four years have passed and Polyneices has gone missing after being radicalized by Islamist groups. As Creon campaigns to become Prime Minister, Polyneices returns with a terrorist attack on civilians in London. It is reported by a Police Commissioner that seven attackers drove vehicles into pedestrians in various parts of the city, and both Eteocles and Polyneices got killed in the event. Creon is persuaded by Aleksy, his Senior Political Aide, to use this situation for his benefit; therefore, he makes the fight against terrorism central to his election campaign. As he becomes the new PM through this campaign, he announces that Polyneices will be stripped of his British citizenship; his body will be refused burial and detained indefinitely at a facility centre. In the meantime, Ismene reveals to Antigone that, in fact, Polyneices had had two children in Syria and he had wanted to come back to the UK. He offered information to the British authorities, so he was allowed entry into the country, but his children were not, and they died in Syria of hunger. He was also detained and tortured in Britain. Thus, according to Ismene, Polyneices joined in this act of terrorism out of fury and desperation. Nikomedes, the Imam, conducts the funeral of Eteocles while Polyneices' body is in the facility centre. Antigone asks Nikomedes' help to bury Polyneices, but he is unwilling, in fear of being accused of helping terrorism. So, Antigone decides to carry out the act on her own. First, she goes and washes the body. The second time, as she goes to finish her work, she is caught wrapping the body. She claims that having washed the body and having said the prayers, Polyneices's soul was able to start its journey. Creon orders both Antigone and Ismene to be put under arrest, but he has no proof against Ismene and eventually lets her go. While Creon condemns Antigone, others mobilize to save her. Haemon and Nikomedes try to come up with a plan to run a public performance to let people hear Antigone's real voice while Ismene and Eurydice agree to organize a women's rally. Tiresias, a computer data expert who helped Creon win the elections, warns Creon of the danger. Creon takes advice and fires Aleksy. However, Antigone is desperate in her cell and commits suicide. In his last attempt to set things right, Creon enters the facility centre and comes out carrying the dead body of Antigone in his arms.

Haemon attacks him with a knife and gets killed during the fight. In the final moment, Ismene leads Nikomedes to hold all the funerals.

2. 3. Adapting Tragic Form

In adapting Sophocles' *Antigone*, these works do not simply make use of the mythical story, or the *fabula* of the tragedy, but they mobilize both structural and performative elements of the tragedy in inventive ways, such as following the episodic five-part structure of the classical play, making use of the Chorus, poetry, music and song, dance, and ritual. However, despite their similarities, the difference in genre also makes these authors' approaches to their subject matter distinct. As a novel, *Home Fire* is both more focused on the interiority of its characters, which makes it more private, and at the same time uses the genre's spatial and temporal conventions to encompass a wider setting around the world, going back and forth between London, Massachusetts, Istanbul, Raqqa and Karachi. In the meantime, Shamsie expands the novelistic conventions to rethink tragedy, such as her use of hashtags and posts on social media in a way similar to the tragic chorus. The five-part structure of the novel parallels the five episodes of the Sophoclean tragedy; however, it also has a very different effect. The narrative structure of the novel is free indirect discourse from the point of views of Isma, Eamonn, Parvaiz, Aneeka, Karamat, each corresponding to a section in the novel respectively. Changing the medium of adaptation to the novel enables Shamsie to explore the interiority of her characters and to show how the story is experienced differently for each character involved.

Naomi Weiss, in her comprehensive survey of tragic form in *Home Fire*, writes about how the novel integrates formal features of tragedy such as speech and dialogue, agon, messenger speeches, chorus, and employment of *anagnorisis* [recognition] and *peripeteia* [reversal] (9). The effect of speech and dialogue in classical tragedy is given in the five-act structure of the novel, each representing the point of view of a different character as the action moves forward. The multiplicity of voices has the effect of responding to one another, summarized by Shamsie as a "relay race" where there is both a "forward momentum" and "different characters looking at each other" (Shamsie, "I don't know who I'd be if I wasn't a writer" 23). This is enabled by the variable focalization, and it reaches its utmost form in the agon or contest of speeches between Eamonn and Karamat, as well as Aneeka and Karamat. Even though the latter two never meet, this effect is achieved by placing their narratives next to and against each other. Within Aneeka's

narrative, Karamat intrudes in the form of a TV news report and a newspaper article. Similarly, within Karamat's narrative, Aneeka both appears and speaks through the news report on the TV. Just like Creon in *Antigone*, Karamat responds to Aneeka's words on the TV by repeating her lines: "heads on spikes. Bodies thrown to unmarked graves" (Shamsie, *Home Fire* 225), repeating the chiasmic relationship between the speech acts of Creon and Antigone in Sophocles according to Butler (*Antigone's Claim* 28).

The speech acts at work in *Home Fire*, between Aneeka and Karamat indicate two fighting discourses. On the one hand, there is the sovereign's speech act as it finds a concise expression in Karamat's two exemplary statements. First of all, his statement "I revoked the citizenship of all dual nationals who have left Britain to join our enemies" is an illocutionary speech act that erases "the right to have rights" by those concerned in the moment of speaking. Secondly, his statement that "[Parvaiz's] body will be repatriated to his home nation, Pakistan" and "We will not let those who turn against the soil of Britain in their lifetime sully that very soil in death" (188) are perlocutionary speech acts that will prove to have drastic effects as its consequence, the killing of Eamonn and Aneeka in the terrorist attack in Karachi. Similar to Antigone, Aneeka challenges Karamat's sovereignty through a positing of contrasting speech acts communicated through media and the TV screen as both characters find ways to infiltrate into each other's narratives; however, unlike Antigone, she does not directly address and contest the Home Secretary. What is more, she neither explains nor tries to legitimize her own motives for her actions. She remains discursively opaque to the very end both by choosing to keep silent and by refusing to conform to the ethical standards of the society. As a law student, Aneeka is aware of the epistemic violence against her implemented by the state. She knows that she is denied the conditions for being heard or credibility. Therefore, by refusing to function within the ethical norms of the state, by defying the very rules of the game, she posits her subjectivity. Unlike Antigone, Aneeka has not buried her brother, but she seduced the Home Secretary's son with the hope of helping her brother, first in life, and then in his death. She has not committed her deed yet; all she is guilty of is scheming to commit the deed. What constitutes her speech act is her staged protest in Karachi where she addresses the TV cameras, being sure that this time her voice is heard by the world: "I am here to ask for justice. I appeal to the Prime Minister: Let me take my brother home" (225). Aneeka is able to resist the epistemic violence by refusing to be contained in that epistemic space. What she does instead is to resist through a performance of her grief.

Weiss also calls attention to how the mediation of the TV screen toward the end of the novel serves the role of messenger speeches in tragedies, such as the ones at the final episode of *Antigone* announcing the deaths of Antigone, Haemon and Eurydice (Weiss 17). This last scene of the novel is communicated in the news broadcast live on the television screen instead of being shown through the focalization of one of the characters' point of views, disabling access to the interiority of its characters in the climactic ending. In relation to this, Peter Ho Davies' review in *The New York Times*, quoted by both Weiss and Ahmed, is critical of the "distancing" and "stagy" effect of the final scene:

> There's an ambitious stylistic shift — Aneeka's section is told in poetic fragments interrupted by a chorus of media reports — but the overall effect is distancing. We lose touch with Aneeka, and never quite get close to Karamat, whose political crisis feels schematic, less inevitable than predictable. The upshot is a headlong final act that aims at stark political theater but at times comes off as only stagy. Tellingly, much of this closing action is viewed through screens, the way most of us engage with terror. (Davies)

In contrast to Davies, Weiss and Ahmed emphasize the significance of this theatricality and performativity in the final scene in terms of resisting the "surveillant gaze" to know the Muslim subject. Paired with the final scene, the opacity of Parvaiz and Aneeka can also be thought of as instances in which the narrative distances the reader from the Muslim characters in question and resists rendering the Muslim transparent for a mainly Western audience (3-4). Rehana Ahmed comments:

> While this distancing of Aneeka might lend itself to the neo-Orientalist construction of the Muslim woman as inscrutable, arguably the layers of mediation deny consumption of her difference by readers both within and of the text. In this sense, the narrative can be understood as resistant to the desire of the western secular reader to 'know' the Muslim woman. (7)

Thus, according to Ahmed and Weiss, instead of facilitating an easy access to Aneeka's interiority, the novel points toward the politics of spectatorship, by showing the moment of the act of watching. Weiss adds that similar to Wallace's idea that Findlay's production made visible the invisibility of the object of the gaze, *Home Fire* highlighted the active participation and complicity inherent in the act of spectatorship. However, just as I criticized Findlay's production for repeating the trope of rendering the terrorist Other inscrutable, I argue that Shamsie's choices also feed into the mainstream Western trope of representing terrorism or the terrorist. Even though the opacity regarding Aneeka and Parvaiz's characterization has the effect of

preventing the easy consumption of their difference, their representation still borders on that of the inscrutable veiled Muslim woman and Muslim male terrorist, the objects of the surveillant gaze per se. Neither does showing the final events unfolding on the screen have a defamiliarizing effect; on the contrary, this is the only known access to terrorist attacks in the public consciousness. The theatricality or "staginess" involved in this representation creates a heightened emotional audience response, which brings it closer to the melodramatic structure of *Dil Se*, but also lacks the tragic sense of choice. What we are left with is the mainstream representation of terrorism on TV, an act of repetition that ends up reproducing the same gesture instead of reiteratively bringing forward an element of subversion by displaying the performativity of the spectacle itself.

Yet, according to Shamsie, the final moment of the novel invites the reader to embody the role of the Chorus (Shamsie, McDonough and McCarter). Ending with the reader, the final tragic element in the novel is the Chorus as represented by various forms of media, such as TV and news, but even more particularly as social media with its hashtags and tweets, such as #PERVYPASHA and #GOBACKWHEREYOUCAMEFROM (Shamsie, *Home Fire* 190) or newspaper reports "'Shattered and Horrified': Sister of Parvaiz Pasha Speaks" (197). Weiss also finds a resemblance to choral odes in certain narratives, such as the parodos of *Antigone* in Parvaiz's narrative, giving the background of the story, and the third stasimon of *Antigone* on love in Eamonn's narrative, detailing how smitten he is (15). Even more striking is the musicality of the novel that is similar to "the choral singing and dancing in the orchestra that would regularly interrupt a play's spoken dialogue" (15), such as when Aneeka, Parvaiz and Eamonn sing and dance to Indian or Urdu pop songs or when Adil Pasha is represented dancing with his beard of icicles chiming in Chechnya. Weiss also underlines the ways in which this musicality accompanies *peripeteia* and *anagnorisis* in the novel. Isma's recognition of her grief comes when she hears the sound of icicles in her apartment and thinks of how Parvaiz was taken up by such soundscapes (12). Parvaiz's recognition, in return, is when he hears the voice of a young Londoner woman in Raqqa, reminiscent of Aneeka, begging for help (173). This becomes his prompt to contact his sister and try to return home. Weiss also notes that Karamat's recognition comes upon hearing Aneeka's howl when confronted by Parvaiz's coffin and when Terry asks Karamat to fix the situation. This is also the moment of *peripeteia* in the play, similar to Creon's attempt to set things right after talking to Tiresias.

Ellams' *Antigone* also adapts formal elements of the tragedy, such as the use of poetry, Chorus, music, song and dance (hip-hop), and its ritualistic dimension in its representation of Islam as religious practice. Ellams modernizes the Chorus in a way to address and appeal to young audiences. Unlike many contemporary versions, he retains the elements of song and dance of the Chorus. By integrating hip-hop culture and their outspoken political dissent through the performance, the play is able to bring out a strong feeling of community that is associated with the Chorus in antiquity but is generally felt to be lost in the modern versions of classical tragedies. The use of poetry is mainly through Ellams' two poems that open the two acts of the play and set the tone and mood. The poem at the beginning of Act I is entitled "You are my people", recited by Antigone and addressing the community, which is both the Chorus and the audience at the same time. This has an immediate effect of bridging the gap between the audience and the cast, as well as inviting the audience to feel as part of the community within the production. Additionally, of the nine Choral parts in total, seven are in verse, which separates them from the rest of the play, and the rhythm of the poetry adds to the musicality of the Chorus. In addition to the poetic effect, the choral parts, with the songs and dances both revive the soul of classical tragedy and get in touch with the modern spirit of its time. The varying combination of the Chorus representing "the voting electorate", the Muslim community, young people, security guards, "photographers and journalists", "a cross-section of the womxn" in the city, protestors in front of Antigone's prison cell, all chanting poems, singing and dancing not just in between but throughout the scenes add to the young urban communal feeling in the play.

The use of social media hashtags, #BuryHate and #ChooseLove (69), also add to the contemporary political feeling that the Chorus represents, so that in the end, the Chorus ends up organizing the political rally to rescue Antigone and stop Creon's unjust power. It is also through the Chorus that the Muslim community finds special representation. The highly aesthetic representation of the Muslim call to prayer and the act of praying in special choreography has two effects. Firstly, as already argued, it has the effect of insisting on the religious quality of Islam that goes beyond a discussion of identity. The play underscores Islam as a religion, as it is practiced by millions around the world today, which goes against the representation of Islam as a political regime. As religious practice, it is given both beauty and dignity. Also, it is given a modern twist, with men and women praying side by side and commenting on equal ground, which is against the gender segregated praying practices in Muslim communities. Secondly, through the representation of Muslim prayers, the ritual aspect of tragedy is both evoked and modernized. The adoption of ritual not only rekindles the spirit of Attic tragedy, but it also

establishes a dialogue across cultures and history, which again adds to the feeling of community within and around the play.

Through the adoption of these formal elements of tragedy, the effect of the play is also significantly altered in a way to facilitate epistemic resistance. As the Chorus and the idea of community become central to the performance, it also denotes a return to the communal roots of tragic theatre as opposed to the prioritization of the individual hero in modernity. In that sense, the play also introduces a second shift in the centre of gravity from individual to community after the modern understanding of Antigone as a solitary figure. This play is no longer about a single girl resisting power, but it is about communities withstanding oppression. This emphasis on community even oversteps the boundaries of the narrative and encompasses the cast and the audience. The play is thus inclusive in a radical sense, not just by extending representation to members of underrepresented groups, but through changing the paradigm.

2. 4. Counter-Discourse and Britain's Metics

By reworking Sophocles' *Antigone*, Shamsie's *Home Fire* and Ellams' *Antigone* carve out an epistemic space for suppressed narratives and employ a counter-discursive strategy that facilitates epistemic resistance. They achieve this in two ways: Firstly, by taking the established plot structure of a classical tragedy as a parable for a contemporary problem, the works question what it means to be a citizen and to belong in UK today. Secondly, they change the rules of the game by shifting the center of gravity within the text. They do not update, modernize and thus make *Antigone* fit for modern consumption, but they dislocate the central conflict or problematic of the tragedy to make space for new ones. For both, the central conflict between Sophocles' Antigone and Creon becomes secondary or dependent upon the bigger issue of what and who constitute Britishness and the British people today. Hence, adaptation provides Shamsie and Ellams with a tool for resistance first and foremost in the discursive field and with a structural model for epistemic resistance not only to make space for alternative narratives to emerge, but also to offer alternatives to the adaptation of Greek classics by the West.

Both works are centred around Pakistani-British Muslims and offer alternative lenses to read recent political developments both in the country and internationally. Their portrayals of Polyneices and Antigone are nuanced by their refusal to adhere to a stereotypical characterization

of the figure of the terrorist as a villain. The problems start when the disillusioned Polyneices wants to return to the UK because Creon, reimagined as the British Home Secretary from a Pakistani-Muslim background (also PM in Ellams), revokes his citizenship status although he is dead and denies him burial in Britain. This situation resonates forcefully with the example of former British Home Secretary Sajid Jarvid who revoked the citizenship of a significant number of people[35]. Both works discuss how the British Muslim youth were radicalized by fundamentalist Islamists, and how such radicalisation was facilitated as a result of racial profiling, police aggression, and the loss of public spaces in the poorer urban areas for the youth's self-expression, such as the closures of youth centres (as in Ellams) and public libraries (as in Shamsie) by the Tory government. In this sense, these works stand out for their decision to use *Antigone* not to try to "understand" the Middle East, portrayed as the inscrutable Other of the West, but rather to explore the suppression within Britain of its own Muslim population. As such, both speak to the spirit of their times directly, and they make use of the established status of the canonical work to talk about the pressing urgencies of the day, succinctly put by Ellams as "hacking the canon" (Ellams, Eastman).

"Hacking the canon" is another word for counter-discourse, which is central to the works of Shamsie and Ellams and is a strategic tool for epistemic resistance. These works function as counter-discourse as they dislocate and use *Antigone* as a counter-text to challenge the hegemonic claims of the empire. Within their prism, the classical tragedy blurs the Western binaries of inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion: Antigone, as a woman and as a rebel, is the outsider that is inside. As a subversive figure permeated within the Western canon, she is the proof that the outside is always already situated within the structures of power of the West. Going back to Butler, as Antigone destabilizes the boundaries of the public and political sphere, which is "secured through the production of a constitutive outside", she infiltrates into its discourse of intelligibility. Hence, she becomes "the occasion for a new field of the human, […] the one that happens when the less than human speaks as a human, when gender is displaced, and kinship founders on its own founding laws" (*Antigone's Claim* 82). Shamsie and Ellams add to Butler's list a more specific form of "the less than human", i.e., the postcolonial agent.

According to Hegel and the mainstream Western readings of Antigone influenced by his writings, Antigone and Creon represent two opposing but equally valid laws (*Phenomenology of*

[35] The most famous of these is Shamima Begum, a 15-year-old secondary school Londoner whose British citizenship was revoked by Sajid Jarvid after she joined ISIS and went to Syria in 2015. Even though Begum appealed to the Home Office many times, this decision has not changed.

Spirit 267-270). *Home Fire* and Ellams's *Antigone* resist this reading by reducing the ambiguity in Sophocles' text as to the righteousness of the figure of Creon and increasing the representative value of Antigone's defiance. This immediately reverses the concepts of law and 'right', as well as the involvement of the hegemonic discourse of the state in relation to it. By rewriting the context, the characters, the narrative, and the genre (Shamsie), they question the foundations of the injustice inherent in imperialism: how the justice system is founded upon an imperialist project and still continues to create a two-tiered definition of citizenship within its populations, hence sustaining the colonizer/colonized dichotomy in its justice system. When Gilbert and Tompkins emphasize that "counter-discourse actively works to destabilise the power structures of the originary text rather than simply to acknowledge its influence" (16), they do not necessarily refer to the power structures within the play text, but they also refer to the power structures built into the canonical traditions around the work. In that respect, Shamsie and Ellams mobilize counter-discourse as a tool to challenge the canonical interpretation of Sophocles' tragedy in the West and to dismantle this reading in order to make space for the suppressed narratives of postcolonial agents who form the constitutive outside from within Britain today.

The very act of adapting *Antigone* within a context of contemporary Britain becomes an act of epistemic resistance. In the Introduction, I argued that in the contemporary versions of *Antigone*, the centre of gravity has shifted from the issue of burial to an enhanced emphasis on how Antigone frames her deed and resists the dominant discourse of the king, i.e., her epistemic resistance. Here, how these works employ epistemic resistance does not arise from the way they centralize Antigone's narrative and her political reasons to bury her brother or to defy the king. Rather, the epistemic resistance first and foremost arises by way of recontextualizing, i.e., the very act of telling the story of British Muslims by way of *Antigone*, and more particularly, reframing *Antigone* through a necropolitical perspective. In Sophocles' *Antigone*, as Creon wants to make an example with not only the dead body of Polyneices through refusing him burial, but also with the living body of Antigone through condemning her to a living death, we are already in the realm of a pre-modern necropower that creates death-worlds to govern the city. By exerting power over the dead body and creating a death realm for the living, giving Antigone "the status of the living dead", Creon mobilizes necropower that extends his powers as a king and disrupts the natural order. In his critique of Foucault, Mbembe emphasises that the historical shift in sovereignty starts with colonialism and it not only controls life, but through the exertion of violence, it mainly also controls death by creating death worlds, which is the definitive

characteristic of contemporary neocolonial form of power. Necropolitical sovereignty does not just control life, but "subjugates life to the power of death" (Mbembe 92). Both in Foucault's example of the Nazi death camp and Mbembe's example of slavery, the sovereign gets to control not just the decision to live and die, and how life is organized (biopower), but equally "the nomos of the political space in which we continue to live" (Mbembe 68). The power and the politics of death is used for discipline, regulation, and the overall governing of populations.

What Shamsie and Ellams do is to mobilize this necropolitical element already in Sophocles' text to argue for this mainly contemporary form of necropower. According to Amina Yaqin, Shamsie's "novels fictionalize a politics in which states are at war with their migrant communities and necropolitical trauma has become a permanent condition used by militant groups to target youth populations who are on the margins of society" (249). In *Home Fire*, necropower is maintained by the British state through the creation of a state of exception by anti-terror laws that are based on the suspension of its legal system, such as the example of revoking of citizenship portrays. But first and foremost, it is manifest in the body of Parvaiz. Yaqin reminds us how Parvaiz reasons while he is approaching the British Consulate in Istanbul telling himself "I'm prepared to face trial if I've broken laws. Just let me go to London. But he was the terrorist son of a terrorist father" (Shamsie, *Home Fire* 171). She also underlines how "[h]is state of exception is determined by necropower of both the British state and the Islamic State" (Yaqin 247). Parvaiz's body becomes a fighting site for the British state, which makes an example out of him to govern its own populations; for IS, which creates death worlds to expand their areas of influence; and for Pakistan, which uses the body within its borders to give a message to its own population against the British state. Secondly, the body of their father who haunts the narrative from beginning to end, is another site of necropower that is claimed by the United States. In that sense, necropolitics becomes – adopting Foucault's description for politics – the "continuation of war by other means" (*Society Must be Defended* 15). Thirdly, the suicide vest itself is a strong symbol to denote the death-worlds controlled by IS and imposed on the people. Finally, Aneeka becomes another body condemned to a living death within the civic structure as her passport is confiscated by British authorities and Karamat decides to prevent her from returning to Britain. Yaqin comments that Aneeka "is now outside the law, a homo sacer" (247). The British state aims to dump Aneeka in Pakistan as befits its neocolonial logic, in the way it has made a habit of getting rid of its unwanted minorities and reduce her to the position of bare life. To this, Aneeka resists by insisting on grieving publicly, appearing on TV, and by visibly making a demand on Britain. As opposed to being reduced to bare life as Yaqin comments,

Aneeka is reminiscent of Butler's criticism of Agamben for disregarding "the modes of agency undertaken by the stateless, the occupied, and the disenfranchised, since even the life stripped of rights is still within the sphere of the political, and thus not reduced to mere being, but is, more often than not, angered, indignant, rising up, and resisting" (*Notes* 80). Instead of coming to terms with being reduced to bare life, Aneeka resists politically and achieves political agency.

Ellams' discussion of postcolonial legacy from within the adaptation of canonical tragedies is not that of unworking the assumption in the writing and history of criticism of these plays, but of reworking the iterability and citationality of Sophocles' *Antigone* to open up a space for being heard. Just as Antigone's resistant strategy is repeating the sovereign's discourse to claim sovereignty for herself (Butler 11), Ellams' strategy is repeating Antigone's speech acts for a postcolonial claim to sovereignty. Consequently, Ellams makes use of Antigone's canonical status and cultural legitimacy to communicate a controversial discussion. This becomes his method for canonical counter-discourse, i.e., to write back to the canon not to dismantle the hegemonic structures that go in the making of classical works, but to mobilize the subversive elements within canonical works to argue in favour of non-hegemonic and/or politically resistant forms of writing. Ellams' *Antigone* appears to repeat Sophocles' plot with a modern twist; however, various details introduce contemporary necropolitical and political elements into the narrative. It is not only the refusal of burial to Polyneices body, but its indefinite detainment in a facility centre that marks this shift. Initially, it may be thought that this change relates to hygiene laws in a contemporary city, but the choice of "indefinite detainment" also has a modern twist peculiar to anti-terror discourse in which living bodies are held indefinitely and without just trials such as in Guantanamo, which again gives them "the status of the living dead" (Mbembe 92). Antigone's indefinite imprisonment, cutting her off from loved ones, with the charge of treason and "no bail or visits, in the interest of public safety and security" (53) is also similar to how Sophocles' Antigone was condemned to a living death in a rock-bound cave. Here, Antigone thinks she will rot in there and that Creon will use her as an example (86), therefore, she decides to take her own life to rid Creon of this necropolitical power over her and over the public. Additionally, the story of Polyneices introduces other elements of Necropolitics. The story that his living body was tortured in Britain and his children were left to die in Syria is telling of the necropower the British state holds, while Polyneices' terrorist attack on civilians epitomises IS' necropower. Both by reworking the necropolitical themes in Sophocles' Antigone and using them to give expression to contemporary forms of necropower, Shamsie and Ellams' works challenge hegemonic state narratives around terrorism and themselves become instances of

counter-discourse. By refusing the British state's narrative around its immigrant and Muslim communities in favour of a redefinition of Britishness and humanity, they mobilize the historical validity of *Antigone*, within its established position in the Western canon, to make a case for a counter-discourse and exert their resistance.

A political theme emphasized by Ellams is leaders clinging to political power at the detriment of the people. This theme is given a contemporary twist by demonstrating that the will of the people can also be manipulated through social engineering and fake news. In *Antigone*, Tiresias is a computer data expert, an obvious reference to the Cambridge Analytica scandal when data belonging to millions of Facebook users was collected without consent to be used for political advertising. This also led to discussions as to whether this data was used to manipulate political campaigns such as Brexit or Donald Trump's presidential election campaign. In addition to Tiresias, Ellams also invents a character called Aleksy, political aide to Creon Jafari, who is responsible for the interpretation of data "to target certain subsections of the population". Thus, how Creon assumes power is scrutinized. It is clear that under normal conditions Creon was losing the elections. His election was only facilitated by his manipulation of the public opinion through data analysis by putting the death of his own nephew, Polyneices, into use. Only by targeting certain sub-groups within the British population and creating a mega narrative around terrorism and the extreme measures for the safety and welfare of the country, was Creon able to win the elections and become Prime Minister. This was also at the expense of betraying his real beliefs and ideas, as well as Eurydice's. In the end, when Tiresias comes to warn Creon of the impending catastrophe, they have an argument with Aleksy where each accuse the other of being responsible for political manipulation. Tiresias claims that Aleksy only utilises the data he provided partially and Aleksy states that they "targeted certain subsections to win the elections" because "some people are irrelevant" (81). This "certain subsections" are the right-wing electorate and Creon ends up instrumentalising their fears at the cost of rising racism against Muslim populations (82-84). With this theme, the play also comes up with a detailed narrative as to the stakes of holding political power in contemporary Britain and how this process feeds into the racism and discrimination in the country.

The play also introduces a potential solution to an array of the problems addressed. Even though these problems are manifold, the major problem solicited in the play is patriarchy, or in other words, "men and power", a point which some of the reviewers of the play thought strayed from the main point. It is firstly framed by Antigone as she is taken to her prison cell and she

speaks to the public: "The world has a problem, it isn't Islam, it's men and power. How they feel without it, and what they do to get it, what that makes them do" (71). Then, Antigone's words are repeated on the radio and the attention of the play turns toward violence against women. In the end, the Chorus embodies a women's rally organized by Ismene and Eurydice to save Antigone from the prison and overthrow Creon's power. The final comment of the Chorus is still violence against women and the way to end it:

> Aren't women attacked too?
> Even by police?
> How many are killed
> by partners each week?
>
> What if there was silence
> and we published … air?
> What might fill the quiet?
> What's there that's rare? (89)

To this Ismene responds as "The questions [Antigone] asked grow louder now she's gone" (89). Therefore, the play underscores that this rebellion is instigated by Antigone, organized by Ismene and Eurydice and encompasses the various women in the city. Similar to the other versions discussed in this dissertation, Antigone is no longer the solitary figure, but she subsumes other female figures, and a multitude of women stand against oppressive patriarchal power in organized rebellion. In order to achieve this, the play gives an increased importance and stronger voices to the figures of Ismene and Eurydice; so, the traditionally silenced women in Sophocles' play turn plotters and organizers in this version. The only downside this ending brings is that in the final scene, it creates the illusion that the whole multitude of political issues will be resolved by a women's rebellion against patriarchy. The complexity of the political issues addressed in the play, in the end, boil down to a single problem around "men and power" erasing the differences created also by histories of conflict around colonialism and imperialism.

Both Shamsie and Ellams read Antigone not as a solitary figure, but either in solidarity with or having the support of other female characters who are given more representation and more robust voices than their ancient counterparts. *Home Fire* follows the traditional plot in the sense of having a solitary figure of Antigone in Aneeka who acts alone instead of organizing in collective resistance. However, the novel is abundant in female figures. Isma is a major character, not one in the shadows like Ismene after all. She is both a maternal figure, an elder sister that runs the family, and a PhD student of sociology with strong political opinions. Karamat's wife Terry, evoking both Eurydice and Tiresias, is a woman entrepreneur and withstands Karamat's

politics. In the end, she is the one to demand Karamat to "Be human. Fix it." (254). In addition to the characters in the classical tragedy, *Home Fire* also presents female side characters. Karamat's daughter, Emily is the business-minded child in the family and a foil to her more sentimental brother, Eamonn, which reverses the gender stereotypes in the family. Aunt Naseem and Gladys are loyal family friends of the Pashas, and with these women, who take personal risks to help, the family is exclusively made up of and run by women, but for Parvaiz, who functions more as a weak foil to these strong females figures. Therefore, the novel again reverses the stereotypical understanding of patriarchal Muslim families with the representation of female characters at the forefront.

Setting off from a Home Office statement during Theresa May's time as Home Secretary in 2013 that "Citizenship is a privilege, not a right, and the Home Secretary will remove British citizenship from individuals where she feels it is conducive to the public good to do so" (ITV), both works question what it means to be British, whether citizenship is a right or a privilege, and how race becomes a definitive factor in the determination of this question. Alluding to this statement, in *Home Fire*, Karamat Lone wants to expand the sanctions of this statement to those that are British born by saying "citizenship is a privilege not a right or a birthright" (198) and as he assumes office, he decidedly revokes the citizenship of all dual nationals who have joined ISIS (188). Similarly, in Ellams' *Antigone*, Creon Jafari says Polyneices "lost the privilege to be British when he attacked us" (25) and that "he is stripped of British citizenship and his body will be detained indefinitely pending necessary procedures. To those who will say this infringes on his Human Rights, I am calling for a British Bill of Rights because the Human Rights Act does not serve us" (24).

Through their references to the Home Office statement, both works challenge what Shamsie terms "the two-tiered system of justice" (Shamsie, "Exiled") at the heart of British politics. According to this system, on the one hand, there are natural-born citizens who have an unalienable right to citizenship. This right is determined by race and is exclusive to the white British. Masters and Regilme Jr also stress that it "has engrained a hierarchical two-tier system of citizenship rights, favouring those who match 'white' notions of 'Britishness'. This consequently establishes the concept of 'Britishness' as having a symbiotic relationship with whiteness" (350). On the other hand, there are immigrants, for whom citizenship is given as a "privilege", conditional upon how they behave in relation to the British state. Such a system leads not only to the revocation of the citizenship status of a limited number of people who are seen by the state

as unworthy of that privilege, but also to the experience of a second-class citizenship by the whole non-white population, creating a vulnerable situation where the citizenship status of a significant portion of the population becomes conditional. A similar point is made by Mbembe to underscore the dichotomy in today's world where "the principle of equality being undone by the laws of autochthony and common origin, as well as by divisions within citizenship, which is to say the latter's declension into 'pure' citizenship (that of the native born) and borrowed citizenship (one that, less secure from the start, is now not safe from forfeiture)" (3). Those who belong to the unalienable or "pure citizenship" group do not lose their citizenship status even if they committed the worst crime in the world, and it is very likely that they will not even be referred to as "terrorists", the term being arbitrarily applied to Muslims in the recent years[36].

The revoking of citizenship creates a condition of what I will call the "neocolonial dumping of UK's human waste" when the responsibility around crimes committed by UK nationals is passed on to UK's neocolonies. Just as the UK dumps its unwanted plastic waste to poorer countries, it also expects the rest of the world to be accountable for its citizens' acts against the state. This finds expression in *Home Fire* in Karamat's thoughts after being criticized by his son for not taking responsibility when the citizens act in ways the government does not like: "[Karamat] sent the paper cup flying in the direction of the rubbish bin. It hit the rim, bounced up, plummeted into the receptacle. Take out the trash. Keep Britain clean" (219). From the receiving end of the narrative, Aneeka's cousin in Karachi expresses his indignation through the following words: "…and then your government thinks this country can be a dumping ground for its unwanted corpses…" (209). According to this narrative, keeping Britain clean comes only at the expense of seeing the rest of the world as a waste. Instead, the politics conveyed by the novel is how the country should also be held accountable to deal with this global scale problem and should seek solutions within its own judicial system. Likewise, in Ellams' *Antigone*, the implication of Polyneices' body being infinitely detained "pending necessary procedures" (24) not only denies him burial within UK, but also outsources the responsibility for him to Pakistan. Creon says, "Pakistan can claim [Polyneices] if they want", to which Eurydice replies: "He can't apply for Pakistani citizenship, for any citizenship… that is making him stateless, you are breaking international law" (25).

[36] Anthea Butler's 2015 article that appeared in *The Independent* and *The Washington Post* simultaneously, "Charleston shooting: Black and Muslim killers are 'terrorists' and 'thugs'. Why are white shooters called 'mentally ill'?" details the history of this as a manifestation of white supremacy.

The UK Home Office's definition of citizenship as privilege is radically at odds with approaches based on human rights, which finds its famous philosophical expression in Hannah Arendt's definition of citizenship in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* as a precondition to having any human rights at all. Having lived through the devastating effects of statelessness as a result of WWII, Arendt was critical of citizenship being a site of "privilege" of nation-states maintained by some "terms and conditions" (177). The denaturalization of unwanted minorities by nation-states created refugees, deported aliens, stateless and displaced peoples. Therefore, statelessness or loss of nationality status was also equal to the loss of all rights: not only citizenship rights, but also human rights. Thus, according to Arendt, a right to citizenship is equal to having "a right to have rights":

> We become aware of the existence of a right to have rights (and that means to live in a framework where one is judged by one's actions and opinions) and the right to belong to some kind of organized community, only when millions of people emerge who had lost and could not regain these rights because of the new global political situation. […] [T]he right to have rights, or the right of every individual to belong to humanity, should be guaranteed by humanity itself. It is by no means certain whether this is possible. (296-297)

In her analysis, Arendt underscores the conflict between universal human rights and the sovereignty claims of the nation-state and thinks that this problem cannot be overcome within the system of nation states. Commenting on Arendt's ideas on statelessness and the arrangements in international law since WWII, Seyla Benhabib states that "neither the right to naturalization nor the prerogative of denaturalization can be considered sovereign privileges alone; the first is a universal human right, while the second -denaturalization - is its abrogation" (50). Alongside the international human rights law that recognizes both the right to seek asylum and prohibits nation states from rendering individuals stateless, Arendt and Benhabib offer a human rights based approach endorsed by Shamsie and Ellams' versions.

In contrast to the Home Office policies, both Shamsie and Ellams demonstrate how people belonging to the immigrant communities are not dual nationals in the sense of having a sense of belonging to both countries. In Ellams, the characters express no sense of belonging to Pakistan or elsewhere, but they ask for a redefinition of Britishness that includes who they are. In Shamsie, the siblings have relatives in Pakistan, where they had planned to go on a trip once, but then the trip got cancelled over arguments with extended family members living in Pakistan. That is also why they have a National Identity Card for Overseas Pakistani, which becomes the grounds for Karamat to claim dual-national status for Parvaiz and to revoke his British

citizenship. Yet, they are culturally remote from Pakistan. Aneeka remembers her feelings over the plans to visit Pakistan: "hating the idea of missing a summer in London to spend it in a country teeming with relatives who thought blood ties gave them the right to interrogate and lecture and point to the sisters' hijabs as proof that British Pakistanis were 'caught in the past' and point to their jeans to prove they were 'mixed up'" (202).

The ones in the diaspora have their own community, their own set of values and culture, and their loyalties belong in their local communities in Britain. As such, both works insist on the Britishness of these characters by questioning the existential challenges of such a positionality and highlight the ambivalences and inequalities in their experience of Britishness. The first question Isma is asked during her airport interrogation sums up the point:

> 'Do you consider yourself British?' the man said.
> 'I am British.'
> 'But do you consider yourself British?'
> 'I've lived here all my life.' She meant there was no other country of which she could feel herself a part, but the words came out sounding evasive. (5)

Being a British citizen and having lived in Britain all her life seems to be insufficient so that the officer needs verbal confirmation as to not only Isma's nationality, but also her national sentiments. Even when they are third generation, immigrants are put through an obligation to perform a certain type of Britishness through answering questions on the British Bake Off or the Queen. Karamat gives voice to how Britishness should be performed by the Muslim community when he addresses students at a Muslim school in Bradford:

> You are, we are British. […] don't set yourselves apart in the way you dress, the way you think, the outdated codes of behaviour you cling to, the ideologies to which you attach your loyalties. Because if you do, you will be treated differently – not because of racism, though that does still exist, but because you insist on your difference from everyone else in this multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multitudinous United Kingdom of ours. And look at all you miss out on because of it. (87-88)

Karamat's speech makes Britishness conditional on giving up on one's difference for the Muslims even though it describes the UK as multitudinous. However, for the Muslim community Karamat fails to represent them. He is not liked in the Muslim community because they think he sold out his identity to conform to the positionality of a Tory politician, taking advantage of being a Muslim and then abandoning his religion when it no longer served him. He had even been voted out by them (247). Thus, the figure of Karamat stands out as a failure to

represent British Muslims in favour of creating a face for "the ideal Muslim" to represent conservative politics. In this respect, both *Home Fire* and *Antigone* call for a redefinition of Britishness within a multicultural cosmopolitanism and different from any premediated definition of the state, as represented by the Creon figures in these works. In *Antigone*, the Chorus of young Muslim boys accuse Creon Jafari of making life tougher for them by launching the surveillance programme of Prevent against the Muslim community (32-33):

> And anyone who anyone thinks
> seems suspicious is thrown on the list.
> How the hell are we meant to feel British?
> how are we meant to just be and just breathe
> when they're pushing our families down to their knees? (33)

What *Home Fire* and *Antigone*'s Muslim characters insist on is their very difference as opposed to what the state tells them. They insist on their right to wear what they want and to practice their religion even if this sets them apart both from the mainstream culture in Britain and their relatives in Pakistan. It is this very difference that defines their identity in the diaspora. According to Clifford, diaspora culture can bring out a distinctive community and define different ways of Britishness. Clifford's example is the black diaspora culture in Britain, but also holds true for the Pakistani-British in this instance:

> And the black diaspora culture currently being articulated in postcolonial Britain is concerned to struggle for different ways to be "British"-ways to stay and be different, to be British *and something else*, complexly related to Africa and the Americas, to shared histories of enslavement, racist subordination, cultural survival, hybridization, resistance, and political rebellion. Thus the term *diaspora* is a signifier, not simply of transnationality and movement, but of political struggles to define the local, as distinctive community, in historical contexts of displacement. (308)

In Clifford's sense, the experience of the British Muslims also exemplifies a way to be British and "*something else*", "complexly related to" Pakistani culture.

The precariousness Shamsie's and Ellams' characters experience regarding their citizenship status becomes central to both works, and Antigone's liminality provides an efficient framework to think through. In Sophocles' play, Antigone is presented as someone in between life and death, walled up alive in an underground vault. Creon sends her to this vault in order to escape the defilement that killing her might bring. Instead, he buries her alive with the expectation that she will commit suicide there. Antigone herself says she does not mind death

because she has been living a life of death after all that happened. She famously refers to this place as "O tomb, O bridal chamber, O deep-dug home"[37] (Sophocles, Lloyd-Jones, ll. 891), signifying her own marriage to death. As someone who is "in between", both metaphorically in between life and death, belonging to neither, and in reality, neither a citizen nor a slave, but having a liminal status, Antigone, as well as Creon, calls herself a stranger or a "metic", *metoikos* [μέτοικος (l. 868)], a positionality that is neither a citizen, nor a complete outsider, but resident alien who is in between. Just before she goes to the cave vault Creon wants to imprison her in, she comments: "always a stranger, O dear god"[38] (Sophocles, Fagles ll. 939-940), and a few lines later she repeats the same term: "I am a stranger!" [ἐγὼ μέτοικος (l. 868)][39] (Fagles, ll. 956). Likewise, Creon says, "This young girl– / dead or alive, she will be stripped of her rights / her stranger's rights, here in the world above"[40] (ll. 975-977). In *Antigone in the Americas*, Castro writes about Antigone's claim to being a metic and rethinks this concept in relation to the issue of citizenship in the Americas:

> Citizenship was the settler's privilege and when slavery was eventually abolished, it was not citizenship but something akin to *metoikia*, an in-between position, that was first extended to natives and aliens. Recall, also, that manumitted slaves did not become citizens in Greek antiquity, but metics. […] even when black and indigenous peoples were eventually de jure recognized as equal citizens in the Americas, they continued to be subjected to the racialized stratification of membership that these logics engendered, thus giving slavery an aftermath" (11).

Starting from Antigone's claim to be a metic after she finds herself in between life and death, Castro, in his article, questions how it can be possible to (re)invent her for strangers in the twenty-first century ("Antigone Claims" 318). Antigone's self-definition as a metic is a speech act that "symbolizes the counter-politics instantiated by strangers today (refugees, undocumented immigrants, noncitizens) as they experience the global conditions of political membership for those ontologically divided between two polities" (308). Similar to the exclusion of blacks and natives from the citizenship framework in the Americas, Shamsie and Ellams' characters, too, face a precarious condition in relation to their citizenship rights. In a way, they become the metics of Britain; not citizens inalienably, but closer to a resident alien, whose liminal and

[37] ὦ τύμβος, ὦ νυμφεῖον, ὦ κατασκαφὴς οἴκησις ἀείφρουρος, (ll.891-892) also see, Fagles, "O tomb, my bridal-bed—my house, my prison / cut in the hollow rock" (ll.978-979).

[38] μέτοικος, οὐ ζῶσιν, οὐ θανοῦσιν. (l. 852) (unhappy one, …neither with the living nor with the dead!)

[39] in context: πρὸς οὓς ἀραῖος ἄγαμος ἆδ᾽ ἐγὼ μέτοικος ἔρχομαι. (l. 868) (To them I go, to live with them, accursed, unmarried!)

[40] μετοικίας δ᾽ οὖν τῆς ἄνω στερήσεται. (l. 890)
(but she shall be deprived of residence with us here above the ground.)

therefore disposable status continues in spite of the process of naturalisation. In Ellams' *Antigone*, when Polyneices' citizenship is revoked, he also loses his right to be buried and his body is indefinitely detained at a facility centre. In *Home Fire*, not only is Parvaiz stripped of British nationality after he is dead and denied entry into the UK, but the Home Office also confiscates Aneeka's passport. Karamat plans to technically deprive her of her citizenship rights by refusing to return her passport and denying her entry to the UK with her Pakistani passport. Therefore, the character in both works still suffer from what Castro terms as "the racialized stratification of membership". This condition, similar to Castro's emphasis, signifies colonialism's afterlife in Britain. Shamsie and Ellams address this double standard in the definition of citizenship that render even second or third generation immigrants precarious and engage in epistemic resistance to challenge this definition. Their aim is to raise awareness by giving voice to both the hermeneutical injustice and the struggle to exist against these exclusionary politics.

Thinking about the implications of staging *Antigone* with a mind to strangers in the twenty-first century, Castro turns to instances when the play has been performed for and by people who are in these liminal positions in regard to citizenship. For example, he states that a performance of *Antigone* by Palestinian refugees[41], "helps us to see the agonism of the stranger in the audience, in the cast, and in the semantic content of the play". Furthermore,

> By making use of the script of Antigone, strangers profit from its literary status, enlarging the scope of their audience in at least two ways: 1) attributing resonance to the theme of the stranger by the cultural position historically allocated to the tragedy, and 2) opening a space of potential political coalition by making lawlessness politically translatable through Antigone's character, which decolonial, feminist, and other movements have also mobilized. (318)

For Ellams and Shamsie, Sophocles' *Antigone* has a similar role. By putting the historical / canonical validity of *Antigone* into use, both authors render the figure of British Muslim qua the metic visible.

Shamsie reflects upon the figure of the stranger through a discussion of themes of home and belonging. As the title of the novel also suggests, one of the central problems in the novel

[41] Castro's article does not acknowledge which production is being discussed, but he only mentions that "Antigone was not only read but also performed by young Palestinians at the Jenin Refugee Camp in the northern West Bank" (Castro, "Antigone Claimed" 317). The play in question is possibly Jenin Freedom Theatre's production of Athol Fugard's *The Island* in Jenin, West Bank in 2013 (N.P., "A Theatre of Protest").

becomes the issue of home. The narrative starts in Heathrow airport, moves on to Massachusetts, US; then back to London UK; followed by Istanbul, Turkey; Raqqa, Syria; and finally, Karachi, which is incidentally also Shamsie's hometown in Pakistan. Where is home? Where do the characters belong? Do they belong to Pakistan in the last analysis as the British Home Secretary claims? Or do they belong in Britain as they claim? Or can they relocate to a new home? On the obvious level, the title *Home Fire* is suggestive of the WWI song, "Keep the home fires burning", underlining the role of women during the war to make sure that their homes are safe, and their hearths are in working condition so that their men can rest assured that they have a place to return. This is highly ironic in the context of the novel, which instead presents a home metaphorically "on fire", ablaze, burning down, on the way to being extinct. The Pasha family's women can no longer keep their home fires burning when men go abroad to fight their jihadist wars.

The theme of home finds expression in the novel primarily as a loss of home and a search for home, which consequently leads to how the Pasha siblings embody the position of Britain's contemporary metics within their immigrant status. The narrative opens with Isma being interrogated at an airport, a setting that is the opposite of home. Isma, as the elder sister and the mother figure of the family, is going to a PhD in the US and letting out their family home to be able to pay the mortgage. In this sense, the novel also opens with the loss of the only home that the siblings ever knew. First, Isma's relocation to the US is a search for home, but she cannot afford any place that might feel like home again. Consequently, she has to live in a one-bedroom flat with a loft window that reminds her of her traumatic experience of surveillance. The only moment when she can reconnect to a sense of home is in memory: When she hears the sound of melting ice on glass, this soundscape suddenly takes her to what she has been missing in the lost figure of her brother: not a loss of reputation and respectability, but deep down, an irretrievable loss of a feeling of being at home. Secondly, Parvaiz's quest to Syria is another search for a home: a promised land where he can be himself and thrive. Farooq promises Parvaiz a new country where he could live the life he deserves without racial discrimination, with freedom of religion and economic prosperity, where he can do his dream job and be well paid. He loses this illusion soon after he arrives in Raqqa and as his passport is confiscated. He realizes that he is trapped there and even though he now lives in a villa, it is neither a real home nor feels like one. Parvaiz can now clearly see that the propaganda that drove him to Syria had been fake all along. Thirdly, Aneeka and Eamonn look for a feeling of home in each other, but that dream is shattered as Parvaiz's reality crushes their lives. Finally, the only surviving home in the novel is

the Lone family home; but it, too, is sacrificed to security concerns. After Karamat becomes Home Secretary, the security measures around the house are tightened to such an extent that some family memories are destroyed: the trees where their children used to make tree houses are cut down and the safe feeling one experiences at home is traded with security guards who only make them feel more and more under threat. In that sense, the Home Secretary's house stands as a metaphor to the country as a home. Increased security measures do not bring in more safety either for the Lones or for the British. The feeling of comfort created by the safety of one's home is sacrificed for tightened security measures in the post 9/11 world. So, the feeling of home is also lost within that very home.

Another way the two works engage with epistemic resistance is by going beyond the discussion of citizenship to call for a redefinition of the human. In Butler's framework, Antigone's deed is significant as she insists on grieving publicly. Her public grieving also challenges the norms that define which losses can be mourned and which cannot. Those who cannot be publicly or properly mourned, i.e., the "terrorist" in these works, are also those that are left outside the normative definition of the human. Antigone, through the public performance of her grief, challenges this norm and calls for a redefinition of the human. Likewise, in both works, the Pakistani-British leader makes an example of Polyneices to be ousted in order to gain political power. In contrast, the characters of Shamsie and Ellams insist on the humanity of Polyneices' body by insisting on the proper rites and the right to burial within Britain. They do this in a number of ways: Firstly, they do this by telling Polyneices' story as a human story that deserves to be heard even if not everyone can relate to it. Instead of the terrorist who remains inscrutable and kills because of being simply evil, Shamsie and Ellams offer alternative narratives for those who are pushed to the realm of inscrutability. This is the story of how the Muslim youth was radicalised when faced with discrimination, racism, and being deprived of a future whereas what they needed for integration was to receive recognition and acceptance as who they were. Secondly, both works insist on reading British Muslims as who they are, not as what they are judged to be. By giving voice to a debate around the problem of immigrant communities, they also discuss potential solutions to the problems. Therefore, these works also function as sites for an open debate to challenge dominant narratives and offer examples to counter the epistemic violence at work there.

In "Towards an Ethics of Reading Muslims: Encountering Difference in Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire"*, Rehana Ahmed explores how the novel "facilitates an ethical reading of

the British Muslim lives" in a Western literary marketplace without turning its representation into an exoticising or Orientalizing gesture (2). She juxtaposes between "anthropological" and "ethical" ways of reading Muslims and argues that anthropological ways of reading Muslims try to render transparent the Muslim subject by "offering insights into the mind of the 'other'" (7). Conversely, "ethical reading as one that is denied and resists an easy consumption of cultural difference, while nevertheless remaining receptive to connecting with others in order to create the potential for some sort of solidarity across difference" (3). It also moves "towards breaking down a 'them and us' dichotomy between secular western readers and the text's Muslim subjects" (9). According to Ahmed, *Home Fire* can achieve a "reading across difference in an ethical and politically resistant manner" (9) by refusing easy access into the interiority of the Muslim subject and preserving the difference through the adoption of theatricality and performativity in the novel. Consequently, for Ahmed, the opaque representation of Aneeka is a refusal of a simplified reading into the Muslim woman. The way Aneeka turns her own experiences, such as her hijab or her grief into almost staged performances and thus narrativizes them complicates any easy interpretation of her actions (7). On the textual level, by introducing differences between Muslims, such as class difference, the novel resists a totalizing reading of British Muslims: "Drawn into a network of different Muslim characters who are often 'reading' or misreading each other, the reader is denied an extended relationship of empathy with a single dominant narrator or focalising character […] In this way, the decentred intra-Muslim perspective facilitates a more ethical mode of reading" (13).

Even more striking than the ways Shamsie adapts the formal elements of the tragedy, is how she adapts its theatricality and performativity. As the discussion around her opaque characterization and the staginess of the final scene of the novel demonstrates, Aneeka's performance and the novel's theatrical quality reach its highest point as she stages her protest in Karachi. Ahmed argues that this theatricality can be read as an instance of "hyperperformance" that illuminates "the politically subversive potential of the novel's melodramatic 'staginess', especially in its representation of Aneeka" (7). From the moment Aneeka meets the Home Secretary's son, she performs a self in a way she thinks will serve her deed of bringing her brother back home. Ahmed draws attention to how "Aneeka performs for Eamonn, constructing a persona for his fantasies but for her interests, and it is she, therefore, who assumes the position of command, subverting the relationship of power that connects them" (5). Here, again, one needs to rethink how much this performance subverts the expectations around Aneeka's character and how much it reproduces the veiled Muslim woman as an object of

fantasy for the male gaze. Although it is true that Aneeka instrumentalises this fantasy to manipulate the situation on her behalf, this fantasy is not deconstructed within the structure of the novel. On the contrary, as Aneeka and Eamonn's relationship is represented as a true love story of star-crossed lovers, this dynamic within their relationship is also normalised. The theatricality and performativity that finds expression mostly in Aneeka's actions does not subvert normative politics of its own accord. Yet, it still has a quality that opens up space for her to achieve visibility and the conditions for being heard, and consequently gives her the tools to subvert the political norms. As Aneeka performs an identity both for Eamonn and her staged protest in Karachi in the public performance of her grief, she is also able to resist politically. First of all, Aneeka, within her performance of herself, does not really conform to any narrative tied around accepted norms. She is neither the femme fatale she is represented by the media as, nor the innocent or pious sister that she would traditionally be represented as an Antigone figure. Nor does she conform to any of the society's ethical standards. She is pragmatic in every way to get to her brother and performativity becomes her method to carve out a space for herself epistemically.

As she has no hope to make sense within the oppressive system, she decides to manipulate the situation to make it work for herself. In that, she is impure, and in Butler's words, "she hardly represents a feminism that might in any way be unimplicated in the very power that it opposes" (*Antigone's Claim* 2). She tries to harness the power she opposes to turn the tables to bring first her brother and then his body home. Being transgressive and "implicated in the idiom of the other" (10), she comes close to Butler's portrayal of Antigone as a perversion of the norm (67). In Ellams' *Antigone*, a similar effect is achieved through the theatrical performance itself. The production rests on the embodiment of Black, Muslim, non-binary, disabled, body positive identities. The diversity of cast in Webster and Tyabji's direction reflects both the diversity of London and is also inclusive around other issues, such as gender and disability. In the Regent's Park production, the part of Polyneices was played by a deaf actor, Nadeem Islam, and sign language was adopted in Polyneices' interactions with family members. Tiresias is described as non-binary, in reference to the ancient myth where he is said to have been turned into a woman for five years, and this also finds expression in the production. The choice of actors for the two major characters in the play, Antigone and Ismene, also challenge the body image conventions that dominate London stages. In her interview for *The Guardian* with Arifa Akbar, Zainab Hasan, who plays Antigone, explicitly talks about how she was discredited as an actor for not having the thin body as required in mainstream British theatre (Akbar, Hasan). The diversity was also visible

in the performance I attended, where there the majority of the audience was composed of secondary school students in London. The diversity in the cast and in the audience allowed for a feeling of solidarity that one does not often sense in London theatres. One could see that the actors on stage were also politically invested in the narrative and performance they were putting life into, and the audience responded to that, as well. For the majority of people in the audience who came from Muslim backgrounds or families, this might be the first time when they witnessed a representation of Muslim communities and religion realistically and without passing value judgements, positive or negative. Particularly striking was the choice of vocabulary to reflect Muslim rituals, such as the preference of the Arabic terminology over its English counterparts, such as *janaza* (Ellams 28) instead of "funeral sermon", "Allah" instead of "God" or words like *hadith*, which creates a sense of inclusion of Muslims into a mainstream theatrical space.

In Ellams' *Antigone*, the more the problematic of the contemporary metic is reflected in the semantic content, cast, and audience; the more the production opens up a space for solidarity and coalition. As opposed to Rehana Ahmed's description of anthropological readings of Muslims, which would render the figure of the Muslim legible or scrutable for a mainly White middle class audience, *Antigone* endorses Ahmed's idea of an ethical reading of Muslims across difference. Without trying to dissolve or consolidate differences, and by representing difference as it is, the play becomes part of the lives it depicts. In that sense, it also opens up a space for political coalitions by the groups it represents and helps strengthen epistemic resistance that Muslims in Britain struggle for today. By changing the context in which the action makes sense, Ellams recreates the conditions in which Antigone buries her brother. Unlike *Pale Sister*, *X'ntigone* or *Eurydice's Cry*, where the burial of Polyneices takes place prior to the action on stage and the issue is secondary or even irrelevant given the predominance of the political debate between Antigone and Creon, in Ellams' *Antigone*, the issue of burial is still the central action on the stage. Yet, it is through the contemporary politics that provide the framework for it to make sense and the play calls forth the canvas of *Antigone* to make alternative Muslim voices heard rather than those of the fundamentalists, and to render Muslim faith visible for what it is, honoured as a belief system as much as any other. Ellams' *Antigone* does not engage with epistemic resistance by just prioritizing Antigone's framing of her deed contra Creon, but the play itself becomes an act of epistemic resistance by being a retelling of Antigone with a mind to the epistemic challenges facing the immigrant Muslim populations in Britain today. Therefore, the play does not evoke the figure of Antigone to look for a universal language for resistance, but it forms a historical

and political alliance with the figure of Antigone to work through contemporary political issues in its day, as well as to form political alliances today.

In their portrayal of Muslim realities, both writers resist playing the roles of cultural intermediaries for the West from their respective standpoints. This role is one that Shamsie acknowledges to have found herself in after 9/11 and has consciously resisted since (Bilal 148). On the level of the author's experience, Ahmed thinks that Shamsie rejects a position to mediate cultures of the Global South for an Anglo-American readership (2). Instead of setting out to reveal "the 'truth' about British Muslims and radicalisation" (3), Shamsie insists on the nuances between the characters and in the failure of representation when it comes to revealing the fulness of a character's interiority. For Ahmed, this approach also brings about "an ethical and politically resistant manner" (3) inviting a "'differentiated solidarity', one that recognises and supports difference while also enabling productive communication and, potentially, political mobilisation across lines of difference (1). In that sense, Shamsie and Ellams' task is not to arrive at an interpretative reading of British Muslims to explicate and solve issues around "terrorism", but to scrutinize existing deadlocks and look for alternative ways of existing together in differentiated solidarity within Britain.

Chapter III

Irish *Antigone*s: Is it worth a handful of dust on Polyneices?

Ireland stands out as a country where *Antigone* has been adapted, rewritten, and staged many times in the last decades, to such an extent that in "Irish Antigone and Burying the Dead", Fiona Macintosh, charting the history of adapting *Antigone* in Ireland (both in the North and the Republic) since the mid-1980s, emphasizes that *Antigone* "is rapidly becoming the exemplary Irish tragedy" (90). Between 1984 and 2022, there were eight new versions produced in the North of Ireland or in the Republic. In the order of production, these are as follows:

1. Aidan Carl Mathews' *The Antigone* (1984) directed by Michael Scott at the Projects Arts Centre, Dublin[42].
2. Tom Paulin's *The Riot Act* (1984) directed by Stephen Rea and produced by Field Day Theatre Company at the Guildhall, Derry.
3. Brendan Kennelly's *Antigone* (1984-86[43]) directed by Colm Ó'Briain at the Peacock Theatre, the Abbey Theatre, Dublin.
4. Conall Morrison's *Antigone* (2003) directed by Morrison and produced by Storytellers Theatre Company in association with the Cork Opera House at the Town Hall Theatre, Galway.
5. Seamus Heaney's *The Burial at Thebes* (2004 and 2008) directed by Lorraine Pintal and Patrick Mason respectively at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin.
6. Owen McCafferty's *Antigone* (2008) directed by McCafferty and produced by Prime Cut Productions at Ulster Bank Belfast Festival at Queens, Belfast.
7. Colm Tóibín's *Pale Sister* (2019 and 2021) directed first by Carey Perloff at the Gate theatre, Dublin with Audible as co-producer[44]; then by Trevor Nunn, co-produced by

[42] Among the eight versions listed here, Mathews' and Morrison's plays exist in unpublished manuscripts. All others are published in book form, as well. Also, all but Mathews' and Paulin's versions, have copies of video recordings in various theatre archives.
[43] The play was written in 1984, but it was produced and published as a play text in 1986.
[44] As co-producer of the play alongside Gate Theatre, Audible also published an audio format of the play with Lisa Dwan.

Angelica Films and the BBC in a screen adaptation as part of BBC4's "Lights Up" Season.

8. Darren Murphy's *X'ntigone (after Sophocles' Antigone)* (2022) directed by Emma Jordan and produced by Prime Cut Productions opened at first the MAC Belfast, then transferred to the Abbey Theatre, Dublin.

The Orwellian year 1984 stands out as the year when *Antigone*s abound in Ireland. In addition to these three new versions, Pat Murphy's film *Anne Devlin* (1984), with its strong allusions to Devlin as an Antigone figure, is regarded by some scholars as an *Antigone* adaptation in itself (Macintosh 90, Roche 247). Also, Athol Fugard's *The Island* was staged at the Gate Theatre in Dublin the same at year. After the 1980s, in Galway, Anouilh's *Antigone* was produced by Druid Theatre Company at Druid Lane Theatre and directed by Martin Drury in 1990. Apart from the productions in Ireland, there were adaptations by Irish playwrights produced in England. These include Declan Donnellan's *Antigone* (1999) at the Old Vic Theatre, London; a student production by Stacey Gregg, *Ismene* (2006) at the ADC Theatre, Cambridge; and Frank McGuinness' opera version with composer Julian Anderson, *Thebans* (2014), covering the three Theban plays for the English National Opera at the Coliseum. Declan Donnellan's and Stacey Gregg's versions have been discussed in PhD dissertations before (Gotsi; Remoundou), as well as a book chapter (Torrence), and McGuinness' opera version brings together *Antigone*, *Oedipus Rex*, and *Oedipus Colonus* rather than engaging directly with *Antigone*.

The longstanding allure of *Antigone* in Ireland is derived from multiple sources, but the salient reason has been an element of national allegory that associates the figure of Antigone with Irish political resistance against British rule, especially during the time of the Troubles from around 1968 until the Good Friday agreement in 1998. In that respect, the context of fratricidal war, which is akin to a civil war, makes *Antigone* resonate with its times, in which Antigone emerges as a figure for civil disobedience like Bernadette Devlin in the Civil Rights movement from 1968 onwards. The play's mainstream interpretation as the conflict between individual conscience versus the law is read into the contemporary political conflict between British forces and Ireland[45]. Therefore, identity formation becomes one of the themes where Antigone represents Ireland's self-definition in contrast to colonial rule. In "1984: Anti-gonizing the Irish Stage", Mariavita Cambria emphasizes that *Antigone* adaptations explore "the troubled recognition of identity within Ireland via the building up of the character of Antigone in relation

[45] See Harkin 292; Heaney, "'Me' as in 'Metre'" 171; Tóibín 46.

with the others and, in particular, through the opposition with both Creon and Ismene" (107). The use of Irish idiom, accents, and political vocabulary in these adaptations evoke this element of national allegory. For example, Paulin and Heaney deliberately employ the idiom, vocabulary and accents of Ulster Unionist politicians in their portrayals of Creon. In "'Me' as in 'Metre"', Heaney writes that he found his inspiration for the metre in his version in "Caoineadh Airt Uí Laoghaire" [Lament for Art O'Leary], the famous lament of Eibhlín Dubh Ní Chonaill (171). In terms of political vocabulary, Harkin draws attention to how Heaney has his Antigone say "Polyneices was no common criminal" (Heaney 23) instead of "not some slave that died"[46] in Sophocles (Fagles, ll. 581), which brings to mind the IRA hunger strikes in Maze prison in 1980-81, where the prisoners demanded the status of prisoner of war instead of common criminal (Harkin 305). From that perspective, Bobby Sands can be thought of as a Polyneices/Antigone figure.

With recent political and economic changes in Ireland, such as the Celtic Tiger boom, scholars have observed that in the more recent adaptations, attention has shifted from local to international politics, from colonialism to forms of neocolonialism or imperialism and its wars, especially in the Middle East. According to Macintosh, Irish versions, such as those by Owen McCafferty in 2008 and Frank McGuinness in 2010, are less about civil war or resistance than a critique of national and imperialist leaderships. In that sense, Macintosh finds a shift of focus from Antigone, the figure of resistance and the issue of burial, to Creon, the male politician who deserves a sympathetic reading in the end (103): "In the post-feminist, post-Celtic-tiger Ireland, it is the problematic male leaders who come under scrutiny: destroying your own house is now both a terrifying possibility and, as in the case of Creon, often a chilling actuality" (92). Similarly, Harkin comments that there is a shift from national to international politics in more recent adaptations of *Antigone* in Ireland (292). In the 21st century, playwrights such as Tóibín and Murphy also raise a feminist voice in their call for an opposition in Ireland today. This emphasis on female resistance was already present in Kennelly's version. Cambria underlines how Antigone's subversive gender position opposes the traditional roles ascribed to women in Ireland (112), and thus the play, as part of a feminist agenda, "conveys a female strength which is at the core of the Sophoclean drama, and which is conspicuously absent in Ireland" (113). Therefore, Antigone not only becomes a metaphor for withstanding colonial or imperialist oppression, but it is at the same time a call to resist patriarchy.

[46] οὐ γάρ τι δοῦλος, ἀλλ᾽ ἀδελφὸς ὤλετο. (l. 517) (It was not a slave, but my brother who had died.)

In this chapter, I would like to offer a brief overview of the history of adapting *Antigone* in Ireland before arguing that in more recent versions, the focus of adaptation shifts towards a quest for epistemic resistance. There is a considerable amount of scholarship[47] on two periods of adapting *Antigone* in Ireland, first in 1984 and second from 2003 to 2008. However, these critical works do not take into consideration more recent productions in 2019 and 2022, and they do not reflect the 21st century emphasis on epistemic justice, which I think is central for the contemporary versions. Therefore, this chapter focuses on two recent productions in Ireland, Tóibín's *Pale Sister* (2019) and Darren Murphy's *X'ntigone* (2022), which have very strong resonances with the epistemic turn in *Antigone* adaptations.

3. 1. Adapting *Antigone* in Ireland

Even though new versions of *Antigone* in Ireland were written and produced in the last forty years, the history of associating *Antigone* with Ireland and Irish nationalism date much earlier. On one hand, Hugh Harkin argues that Antigone could not have represented the Irish struggle for independence in the 19th century and beginning of 20th century as "the notion of Antigone as some kind of 'anti-imperialist' would not have registered then in the way that it has come to register for audiences today. Friedrich Hegel's interpretation of a collision of equally justified moral powers - the state against the individual, right versus right - was and to a large extent remains the dominant reading" (293). However, "in the wake of countless state-perpetrated holocausts and genocides, the righteousness of Creon has increasingly become hard for today's audiences to swallow" (293), and as such, in the contemporary versions there is a shift of interpretation toward resistance against tyranny. On the other hand, contrary to Harkin, Macintosh emphasizes the early relevance of the thematic elements within the play to some aspects of Irish cultural history. She emphasizes that starting from the 19th century, the interest in *Antigone* is also related to the public character of funeral practices in Ireland as part of its culture as opposed to the more private mourning practices in the rest of Europe. Also, female figures of Irish nationalism such as Erin and Deirdre have come to be associated with the figure of Antigone (91). In the early performances from 19th century onwards, such as the appraisal of Mendelssohn's *Antigone* performed by Helen Faucit on the Dublin stage with the Bartholomew translation of the play, Macintosh finds the Irish nationalist sentiment against British colonialism.

[47] See Macintosh (2010), Roche (1988), Murray (1991), Atkins (2010), Gotsi (2012), Remoundou Howley (2010), Younger (2006), McKracken (2006), Brown (2006), McDonald and Walton, eds. (2002), Dillon and Wilmer, eds. (2005).

She comments that "[a]gainst the background of British rule, Antigone clearly becomes Ireland, oppressed by the tyrant, while remaining until the bitter end a hopeful resistance figure around which Irish Romantic nationalists might rally" (95). Thus, according to Macintosh, the play's function as a national allegory already lies at the heart of a long tradition of adapting *Antigone* in Ireland.

Yet, the play's associations with nationalist sentiment became even more apparent during the 1980s. With three new versions by Mathews, Paulin, and Kennelly in 1984, *Antigone* became a focus of interest with a renewed significance in relation to both the political problems experienced in the Republic and the Troubles in the North. In the aftermath of the 1980 and 1981 Maze Prison hunger strikes in the North, and in the heat of the Irish Troubles, 1984 is also the year of the IRA's Brighton Hotel bombing that targeted Margaret Thatcher and British Conservative government members. Christopher Murray lists the political highlights of that year: "This was the year of the New Ireland Forum *Report*, the year of the Criminal Justice Bill; the year of the Kerry Babies' Case; the year after the failure of the abortion debate, and the year before its sequel, the debate on divorce which ended in a crushing defeat for liberal opinion in Ireland" (129). Therefore, what actually prompted this renewed interest in *Antigone* was not theatre, but politics. Even earlier in the North, it started as a political debate initiated by the previous left-wing diplomat Conor Cruise O'Brien in 1968, when he wrote an article for *The Listener*, on the issue of civil disobedience as a current issue in the North of Ireland, which he read into *Antigone*. O'Brien quoted this article fully in his book *The States of Ireland* (1972), where he once more read Antigone as a figure of civil disobedience, similar to the young protesters in Derry in October 1968. O'Brien gave the gist of his view on the general topic just before he quoted his article: "It was much less easy to predict what would come out of the civil rights struggle. …What was certain, already, was that much blood would be shed" (156). He referred to Sophocles' heroine as "the girl who deliberately, without violence, broke the law—by burying her brother Polynices, against King Creon's command—knowing that death would follow" (156). In that respect, if death or bloodshed was certain to follow, then the fact that the deed itself was not violent was insignificant. For O'Brien, the subsequent bloodshed must be considered as inextricably linked to Antigone's action, and consequently he condemned non-violent protest, as well. He argued that the ensuing deaths were "A stiff price for that handful of dust on Polynices" (157). Another impact O'Brien has had on more recent Irish adaptations of *Antigone* is his interpretation of the main conflict in the play as one between individual / family conscience and state / public authority. Thirdly, O'Brien favoured Ismene's common sense over

Antigone's activism which he associated with civil rights movement leaders like Bernadette Devlin. He commented that "after four years of Antigone and her understudies and all those funerals […] you begin to feel that Ismene's commonsense and feeling for the living are preferable" (O'Brien 159).

O'Brien's critique of the heroine from within the violent atmosphere of the Troubles can be traced in all the subsequent Irish adaptations that responded to his views in one way or another. Both Tom Paulin and Colm Tóibín stress that they got to know Sophocles' play through O'Brien's articles (Paulin, "Antigone" 166; Tóibín 44). Tom Paulin responded to O'Brien twice: first in his 1982 article "The Making of a Royalist" [48], in which he accused O'Brien of turning right-wing in his politics as exemplified by his interpretation of *Antigone*, and the second time in his own version of the tragedy, *The Riot Act* in 1984. He criticized O'Brien for misinterpreting the play and in writing his own new version of it, he set out to try and prove him wrong ("Antigone" 167). Tóibín, on the other hand, in his "Author's Note" to *Pale Sister,* was more appreciative of O'Brien's interpretation and his preference for the pragmatic figure of Ismene, and perhaps this was consequently what inspired him to promote Ismene in his own version. Just as O'Brien pointed toward Ismene's "commonsense and feeling for the living" (159), Tóibín was predominantly interested in what voice the silenced figure of Ismene could assume if and when she started speaking (46).

Unlike various postcolonial or non-Western examples where Antigone serves as a palimpsest to imagine a uniquely contemporary situation, there is some reservation in Ireland when it comes to reimagining the classics as a result of the privileged status given to the classics within the educational system. Even though this tendency has changed in Tóibín and Murphy (in addition to Mathews in 1984), there are more adaptations in the form of translations than rewritings. Among these, the earlier ones are written by poets, such as Mathews, Paulin, Kennelly and Heaney, which is suggestive of an unspoken expectation for "poetic licence" when it comes to adapting an otherwise untouchable classic. These works are not literal translations, but new versions either based on English translations or directly translated from ancient Greek. The cultural or modern political references are either embedded in the text or they appear through stage design. They are all based in Thebes; however, the stage design generally depicts a modern setting and plays around temporal implications of the play. It is sometimes made apparent in

[48] Paulin republished the article in his book *Ireland and the English Crisis* in 1984, and it is this version which I will be referring to in this chapter.

stage directions in the play text, such as the masonic symbols and neo-classical architecture in Paulin, or the projected screen displaying scenes from the Israeli occupation of Palestine in Morrison. They follow the plot structure of Sophocles by adopting a seven-episode structure each followed by a choral song. Heaney, Paulin and Donnellan adhere to the Chorus of Theban elders; however, Kennelly, Morrison and McCafferty have one-person Choruses.

In spite of the adherence to the Sophoclean formal structure, these adaptations in the form of translation reflect their contemporary politics through adopting a new style and diction. In that sense, they challenge the dominant epistemic framework of politics and resist the injustices related to them. They do so by repeating the example of *Antigone*; thus, in their case, reiteration becomes the site of invention for a new resistant politics. They first and foremost rely heavily on the gesture of reproducing *Antigone* to make a political claim on today. Their divergences from Sophocles that relate them to the contemporary times get invented mainly in diction and in performance. The choice of words become their minimalist interruptions in the contemporary debate in combination with the modern setting that the performance suggests. This is different from rewritings of the ancient play, which rather function as more assertive or outspoken responses to Sophocles' tragedy and modern politics in dialogic relationship with them. With the exception of Mathews, the central conflict in these plays is still the issue of burial. As such, Heaney's choice of the play's title as "The Burial at Thebes" is no coincidence. Linked to the Irish traditions of paying respect to the dead and lamenting, Heaney's emphasis on burial reflects the political turmoil of the Troubles and brings to mind the killings and the disappeared of that period through the hands of the IRA or the British State, a recurrent theme since his bog poems[49].

Until Tóibín's version in 2019, Mathews' *The Antigone* is the only total rewriting in Ireland as a response to Sophocles' *Antigone*, but it can also be seen as an early attempt at epistemic resistance. It is a version that borders on the postmodern and is marked by the use of metatheatrical devices. It portrays actors as they prepare to stage one last performance of *Antigone*; however, they are tired of playing the same parts for thousands of years, they cannot remember their lines anymore, and they question their roles. Mathews has his one-person Chorus say at the opening of the play that "The dream is set in Ireland in the 1980s BC, soon

[49] In his bog poems in *Door into the Dark* (1969), *Wintering Out* (1972), and *North* (1975), Seamus Heaney draws a parallelism between the political violence in contemporary Ireland and the Iron Age bog bodies discovered in Northern Europe and Ireland. As the Irish boglands become another site where disappeared bodies of those killed by the IRA are discovered, for Heaney, the bog bodies that link the violent past to the present become symbols of repetition of cultural violence in history.

after Sparta has entered the war on the German side" (qtd. in Roche 231). The reference is to totalitarianism that threatens contemporary Ireland for Mathews, just as it did in Germany during WWII or in the ancient context. During the production, not only a copy of the 1984 Criminal Justice Bill that increased the powers of the police was handed out to the audience before the start of the play, but it was also played continuously from a tape in the background during Act 1 and during the interval, suggesting it as "a threatening ever-present undertone…, a slow erosion of the ground of individual liberty" (Roche 230). In that respect, the Bill stood out for Mathews as a contemporary metaphor for totalitarianism. In this setting, Creon erases the memory of Polyneices, or "Poly", and Antigone's deed is not to bury her brother, but to remind everybody of his existence by writing the initial "P" on the walls, which gets to be erased by the Chorus, Creon's accomplice. Ironically, Eteocles is named "Peteocles" or "Petey", obliterating the difference between the brothers and the line that separates them. This is also a reference to enforced disappearances and erasures of political opponents from people's memories typical of totalitarianisms around the world, as well as those that disappeared in Northern Ireland during the Troubles. Creon's erasure of Polyneices from all photos is reminiscent of Stalin similarly removing his opponents like Trotsky. During the play, a Critic stands up from among the audience and criticises the whole production. As the Critic speaks, there is a blackout and when the stage is lit, the Chorus is shown mopping the blood in the floor where the Critic stood a moment ago. Similarly, Antigone also disappears from the play, but Hemon, who is Creon's chief of police in this version, claims that "she was seen in Kharkov only last year" (qtd. in Roche 236), suggestive of Antigone being a symbol for resistance around the world. As early as 1984, Mathews portrays Antigone not interested in burial, but engaged in epistemic resistance and in search of an alternative narrative that seeks to disclose the truth. Historically speaking, as the adaptations in Ireland move from local to international politics, namely, the horrors of imperialist wars and occupations in the Middle East (especially the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan), by 2010s, the emphasis shifts from physical political resistance to resisting dominant narratives, which finds a marked expression in Tóibín and Murphy's versions. This also gives rise to a freer approach to rewriting the classical tragedy, arguably dissolving the halo around translating a classic by prioritizing reimagining. In that respect, Tóibín and Murphy's versions are successors of Mathews' unique interpretation in Ireland that emphasizes the element of epistemic resistance as early as 1984. However, they introduce contemporary political themes and approaches that nuance and shift the focus once again.

3. 2. Colm Tóibín's *Pale Sister*

Colm Tóibín's *Pale Sister* is the outcome of his collaborative teaching of "The Antigone Project" course with Lisa Dwan at Columbia University in 2018. As a response to contemporary politics, Tóibín singles out *Antigone* as "an intervention in the contemporary debate" on "gender and power, about abuse of power by men, about silence and speech" (Tóibín, *Pale Sister*, "Author's Note" 44), echoing Heaney's comment that in Ireland, *Antigone* functions as "less as a text from the theatrical repertoire and more as a pretext for debate" (Heaney "The Jayne Lecture", 414). Tóibín's approach, though, is close to Honig's idea of an "interruption" in political theory and *Antigone*'s reception history discussed in the previous chapter. For both Tóibín and Dwan, rewriting and performing *Antigone* becomes an instance for an intervention into patriarchal and oppressive sovereign politics. By challenging their narratives and power dynamics in favour of women, and particularly in relation to the ongoing feminist protests in the arts industries and in the street, *Pale Sister* actively engages in a feminist form of epistemic resistance today.

Pale Sister is a historiographic revision of *Antigone* from the point of view of the silent sister, Ismene, who has first changed into a witness figure and then a protestor speaking truth to power. It is a one-act, one-person play divided into seven scenes following the classical seven-episode structure and signalled by the use of lighting. The whole action is one long monologue by Ismene. *Pale Sister* is a continuation of the recently increased emphasis on Ismene by Bonnie Honig, Simon Goldhill, and Slavoj Žižek, as well as Gregg's theatrical adaptation *Ismene*. Pointing toward the contemporary interest in minor characters' perspectives, Jeremy Rosen, in *Minor Characters Have Their Day*, develops the concept of "minor character elaboration" to refer to "a genre constituted by the conversion of minor characters from canonical literary texts into the protagonists of new ones" (2). According to Rosen, this trend among fiction writers is less about "instances of feminist 're-vision' or 'writing back' from the margins (4), or "ideological critique of the canon for excluding or 'silencing' socially marginal characters" (4), but it is rather "a successful vehicle for the culture industry" (40) that seeks to recycle stories by making them more profitable in the global literary market. Rosen is highly sceptical of the transformative qualities of this form of counter-discursive writing whilst he underscores the ever-growing interest in minor character elaboration and its role in carving out an epistemic space for alternative narratives. Rosen's critique does not really hold when it comes to theatrical works as they are always already being reproduced in new versions all the time to respond to the shifting social, cultural, and political dynamics. In terms of *Antigone* adaptations in Ireland, minor

character elaboration does not seem to have a special impact on the theatrical market. Instead, the abundance of retellings with varied shifts of emphasis demonstrates how there can be multiple ways to experiment with a tragedy that has been retold over two millennia. In that respect, *Pale Sister* stands out as an example that makes use of minor character elaboration to pull the play's gravity toward epistemic resistance and political protest.

Pale Sister was produced twice with Dwan as the actor. The first production at the Gate Theatre, Dublin in 2019 was directed by Carey Perloff. The second was a TV adaptation in 2021 directed by Sir Trevor Nunn for the "Lights Up" theatre season of BBC 4 during the pandemic. In this chapter, I will primarily discuss the more recent BBC 4 version, which I watched streamed during lockdown, and refer to the reviews of the 2019 production where necessary. Both the play script and the performances make use of an empty and neutral set (though any claim to neutrality is also open to contestation) as there are no stage directions or references to time and place in the script, but distinctions are made by lighting to suggest changes of mood and scenes. While the first production made use of a minimalist, yet grand set design of rocks and slabs of stone, the BBC production placed the action on a bare black box set where the action was marked by strong changes in lighting. Unlike the anthracite sleeveless top, trousers, and the military boots adopted in the 2019 stage performance, in 2021 Dwan wore a sleeveless white dress resembling a silk nightgown, which rather emphasized the vulnerability of her character. Moreover, the camera focused on Dwan's face in close ups most of the time alongside sharp lighting that highlighted her facial expressions as well as sensory details. Considering both Nunn's and Dwan's recent engagement with Beckett's plays[50], the minimalist décor, small acting space, the non-specificity of time and place, the use of lightning to convey mood and affect, and the employment of visceral qualities in performance were reminiscent of Beckett's theatre, particularly his one-woman monologues such as *Not I*, *Rockeby*, and *Footfalls*. Tóibín's adoption of a one-woman monologue also facilitated this resemblance. Additionally, the links between Dwan's performance and her previous Beckett acting did not escape the notice of the commentators. Lara Cox noted that "[Dwan's] mastery of voice … recall her better-known role as the fast-talking, floating pair of lips of Samuel Beckett's *Not I*". Yet, these same qualities also drew the most criticism. Peter Crawley found her voice "stentorian", while for Helen Meany it was "tonally repetitive". According to Jim Keaveney, Beckett acting does not favour Dwan's

[50] Dwan acted in Beckett's *Not I*, *Rockaby*, *Footfalls* (2013), and her own adaptation of Beckett's prose work, *No's Knife* (2016), as well as recording her voice for Nunn's *Eh Joe* (2020). Nunn directed *All That Fall* (2012), *Krapp's Last Tape*, *The Old Tune*, and *Eh Joe* (2020 -in a triple bill). After they worked together on *Pale Sister*, Nunn directed and Dwan acted in a production of *Happy Days* (2021).

performance as "Dwan immediately ramps up the pitch and sticks with an almost-monotonous delivery that fails to deliver on the subtlety of the character. There are Beckett pieces where this works, but it doesn't here". Arguably, Dwan drew a lot from her experience as a Beckett actor in the way she used her voice like an instrument with its high and low pitches, and the way she used her body to increase the play's affective qualities.

The play opens in the aftermath of the events in Sophocles' *Antigone*. It is understood from Ismene's long monologue that she and her sister live in their own houses, but that she, Ismene, often visits their uncle's house during the day. This suggests a separation of the house of Labdacus into two modern nuclear families instead of the classical understanding of the extended family where Creon is *kurios* [κύριος], i.e., the head of the house, *oikos* [οἶκος]. In the opening scene, Ismene is alone in her room at night, describing how she is regularly visited by Antigone, either as a dream vision or as a ghost. According to Ismene, Antigone demands that, as the silent witness of what has happened, she stands in front of Creon's palace and protest silently. Ismene acknowledges that she will also speak because she wants the truth not to fade away. When Ismene begins narrating the previous events in the second scene, she starts from the cruelty of Creon, remembering how once he punished a young man by tying him to a post and scaring him with fierce dogs. This story becomes the context for her mistrust of Creon as he appears to be someone who could do anything for power. In the third scene, similar to the opening of the Sophocles play, Antigone approaches Ismene with the idea of burial. However, this Antigone does not ask her sister to share her deed, and instead asks her to remain behind. The fourth scene recounts the moment of the reception of the news of the two brothers' deaths in Creon's house where Ismene is a guest. As Creon assumes the role of the king and declares his edict, Ismene observes how this radically changes Creon forever into a cruel man who is, deep down, feeling very insecure. The fifth scene presents Ismene narrating how Antigone appeared before Creon after being caught burying her brother. Antigone's words almost soften Creon's rigidity; however, Haemon interferes accusing his father of provoking and prolonging the war, which erases Antigone's influence and causes Creon to return to his rigid state. Creon then orders Antigone to be taken away. In the sixth scene, Creon is reported to massacre Polyneices' supporters. Eurydice realizes that Haemon is missing. Creon, Eurydice, and Ismene depart for the walled-up cave where Antigone is kept. They find her hanged and Haemon commits suicide on the spot. It is only after Antigone and Haemon die that Eurydice silently convinces Creon to bury all the bodies. At the end of the scene, Creon accuses Ismene of mocking him, to which she replies by speaking up for the first time, by saying that she is not afraid of him. The final scene is

cyclical, going back to the beginning where Ismene, alone in her room, sees a dream vision or is visited by Antigone's ghost, who tells her to stand and accuse. However, this time, Ismene feels that Antigone subsumes her, becoming one with her, and the scene closes as she says she is not afraid anymore.

Pale Sister is a play less interested in the issue of burial than the ensuing epistemic resistance, speaking truth to power. Consequently, the burial becomes more of a background to the narrative, giving rise to it, but by no means being central to it. Instead, at the centre of the play, Tóibín places the figure of the witness, Ismene, as she assumes a voice while Creon is represented as a cruel ruler that submits to popular demand. In that sense, *Pale Sister*, is critical of rising right-wing populism and post-truth politics endemic to its own time of production. Indeed, in her articles and interviews, Dwan mentions the Trump campaign as one of the factors that gave rise to her need to reproduce Antigone:

> Most Trump supporters probably didn't have much knowledge of ancient Greek literature. But his campaign still repeatedly used the image of Perseus holding up the severed head of Medusa, sometimes with Hillary Clinton's face superimposed on it. Trump certainly knew how to trigger a deep and ancient narrative of misogyny. And it worked ("Courage").

Consequently, she feels the need for a feminist revision of myth to challenge the underlying motifs of patriarchal culture. For Dwan, who sees a continuity in misogyny from Greek mythology to Trump's campaign, reimagining *Antigone* became a counter-canonical effort to subvert this tradition and to rewrite suppressed women's narratives in the form of writing back to patriarchy.

Tóibín shares the basic premises of Dwan's agenda to write a feminist play. In allowing Ismene to narrate her story, Tóibín looks for something previously overlooked in her complicity, "something more dramatic than simple passivity". Instead, he wants her "to be both chorus and protagonist" (Tóibín, "Sister Act"), or, according to Helen Meany, both "chorus and messenger". Indeed, Ismene's one-person narrative is one that contains all other voices. Primarily, Ismene performs and gives voice to Antigone and Eurydice, indicated in the text in italics instead of quotation marks. At these times, Ismene actively embodies Antigone or Eurydice to the extent of forming an alternative chorus with them. The BBC production reflects this embodiment through dividing the screen in half, in a way to double Dwan as Antigone and Ismene at the same time. In addition, at times, Ismene also gives voice to some lines of the

Chorus in Sophocles' play, such as at the beginning of Scene 6, when Ismene says, "wonders are many, yet none more wonderful than man" (31). Uttered in reference to the massacres Creon commits, in Dwan's interpretation of the line, the suffix "-ful" gets a special emphasis so that it rather sounds like "full of wonders" than simply "wonderful", thereby aiming to nuance the word and mimic the double entendre created by the use of *deinon* [δεινόν (n), δεινός (m), "δεινὰ" (ll. 332)] meaning both wonderful and terrible in the Ancient Greek. This assumption of the role of the protagonist, the Chorus, messenger, as well as Antigone and herself in Ismene's character becomes Tóibín's way of exploring the complexity of the interiority of his protagonist in depth, which is characteristic in his novels. Set against a tradition of poets rewriting Antigone while still playing around the notion of translation, Tóibín, the novelist, prefers to come up with a highly poetic prose that also aims to reinvent the dramatic dynamic in the tragedy. For this reason, critics such as Jim Keaveney, Helen Meany, and Peter Crawley agree that the play is better on page than on stage and that the theatrical performance does not do justice to the lyrical qualities of its text.

Just as he focuses on the inner world of his protagonists in his novels[51] to delve into the totality of their human condition, Tóibín is thus first and foremost interested in the exploration of interiority and searches for affects that are representative of the human such as fear, timidity, cruelty, sense of justice, courage, and thirst for power. For Antigone, this is anger, indignation and rebellion; for Ismene, it is her timidity, fear, and the way she leans into her fear to find courage within, whereas for Creon the dominating feeling is his cruelty. Indeed, what gets invented in this version is exactly Creon's cruelty with a whole scene devoted to it, which has no counterpart in Sophocles or in any other version. Ismene recounts how he punished a boy that displeased him by exposing the boy to fierce dogs. He has a dark side, "an edge to him that was uneasy, guilty, guarded, like someone who will soon be found out" (*Pale Sister* 18). In Tóibín's version, Creon's leading motivation that paves the way for his punishment of Antigone is thus not any political conviction or determination to rule single-handedly, but this cruelty that lies underneath an appearance of kindness and gentleness. This dark force within Creon's psyche that used to be mostly dormant previously, takes over when he becomes king and becomes the governing force of an oppressive regime. This can also mean that for Tóibín, oppressive regimes, when traced back to their basics, are rooted in cruelty that lurks within the recesses of the human soul. The problem with this approach is that it reduces the figure of Creon to one feeling, force,

[51] Some examples are the detailed characterizations of Electra in *House of Names*, Jorge in *The Story of the Night*, Eamonn in *The Heather Blazing*.

or condition, both pathologizing him and eliminating the complexity of feelings or forces in the making of his character. This is also what disrupts any claim to righteousness on the part of Creon's actions and makes it impossible to sympathise with him by turning him into a villain.

Creon speaks in performatives, given in the text in quotation marks, such as in his announcement of his edict, "Let Eteocles be buried with full ceremony" (23), underlining his sovereign speech. In his performatives, Creon is clearly culpable of what Medina terms "epistemic insensitivity", "the inability to listen and learn from others, the inability to call into question one's perspective" characterized by epistemic vices like arrogance, inflexibility (31), closed-mindedness (34), and an overinflated sense of entitlement (57). When Eurydice asks if she can intercede, Creon replies "you can weave" (25) in a veiled reference to Penelope, Odysseus' "dutiful" wife, totally downplaying her sensibility and suppressing her in patriarchal epistemic violence. Even so, in the end, it is Eurydice who silently convinces him to have the bodies buried (35), which demonstrates what Medina terms as "meta-blindness", "a special difficulty in realizing and appreciating the limitations of their horizon of understanding" (75). As opposed to Creon's epistemic vices, both Antigone and Ismene emerge as epistemic heroes. According to Medina, epistemic heroes are "extraordinary subjects who under conditions of epistemic oppression are able to develop epistemic virtues with a tremendous transformative potential" (186). In contrast to meta-blindness, these subjects display "meta-lucidity", "aware[ness] of the effects of oppression in our cognitive structures and of the limitations in the epistemic practices (of seeing, talking, hearing, reasoning etc.) grounded in relations of oppression" (192). Ismene's insistence on truth as distinguished from the sovereign's truth and her idea that Antigone would mock Creon's claim to truth are instances of meta-lucidity when limits of cognitive structures are put under scrutiny. Even though Medina calls them heroes, he argues that these people are not isolated individuals, but they derive their power from the echoability of their actions in the everyday practices of the oppressed. Their actions have the potential "to become part of a performative chain of resistance with transformative potential" (245). Likewise, Ismene's resistance echoes Antigone's, joining her in collective action. Their acts of resistance are not defending their right to burial, but withstanding Creon's unquestionable oppressive power and speaking up their truth against all odds.

Another novelty *Pale Sister* introduces to *Antigone* is the way it questions the will of the people as a collective entity. In Sophocles, Haemon warns his father about the growing discontent in the streets in favour of Antigone. He says,

> the way the city mourns for this young girl.
> "No woman," they say, "ever deserved death less,
> and such a brutal death for such a glorious action
> (Sophocles, Fagles, ll. 776-778)[52]

As opposed to this, Tóibín's version shows Creon bending to popular will. After he fails to convince Antigone of the validity of his law-making as a king, Creon ends up defending his edict by seeking recourse to popular will: "There is anger against your brother. Listen to the voices in the street. Ask those who gather in the market. I must attend to those voices" (26). The voices in the street, which represented a sense of demos and democracy in the sense of demonstrating the will of the people in Sophocles, have come to represent the most reactionary drives of the mobs in *Pale Sister*. Thus, in the end, when Creon orders all bodies to be buried, Ismene's observation is "My eyes dart to the men standing at the side. They are nudging each other, smiling darkly. They know, as I know, that it has all been for nothing. / My sister has prevailed" (36). In that respect, Tóibín's contribution is a critique of right-wing populism and fascism that mobilise a reactionary anger and motive for violence in the streets instead of seeking counsel in the will of the people as befits a democratic government. Creon only seeks to satisfy the hunger for violence and is further removed from any understanding of democracy. Ominously, having been written in the aftermath of Trump's election campaign, Tóibín's version also foresees the day when Trump supporters stormed the Capitol seeking to overturn the certification of the 2020 presidential election.

Pale Sister interrogates how the figure of Antigone has previously been represented. Just as Dwan is concerned about Antigone's portrayal as "an irrational idealist, a troublemaker, a fascist or a shrew", Tóibín also agrees that she can "no longer be presented as enraged, hot-headed or hysterical against Creon's calm rationality" ("Sister Act"). Therefore, as Dwan insisted that the play should explore the possibility that Antigone may be in the right, Tóibín agreed with her, giving voice to the idea within the play. Ismene believes that Antigone will speak again, but "She will not speak of how foolish she was, or how impetuous, or how brave. Or how right she was. / Yes, maybe that too" (*Pale Sister* 13). Ismene contests the others who say that Antigone's voice was "more shrill" on the day of the burial, but she "was radiant; her voice was low, direct, deliberate, unstrange. / It was as though she, yes she, had become the king" (20). Therefore, for

[52] τὴν παῖδα ταύτην οἳ᾽ ὀδύρεται πόλις,
πασῶν γυναικῶν ὡς ἀναξιωτάτη
κάκιστ᾽ ἀπ᾽ ἔργων εὐκλεεστάτων φθίνει· (ll. 693-695) (how the city is lamenting for this girl, saying that no woman ever deserved it less, but that she is to perish miserably for actions that are glorious)

Tóibín, the king-like quality both characters display also becomes what sets Antigone apart from Ismene, marking the latter as more life-size. Yet, in the end, as Antigone gradually subsumes Ismene (39-40), she also represents a quality in each individual to find the courage to withstand oppression. Hence, the play does not just question the possibility that Antigone might be right, but ultimately her resistance becomes the only right thing to do against an oppressive regime. Therefore, for Tóibín, even if Creon and Antigone represent two forces and two laws, Antigone's outweighs Creon's, becoming "the law" in the end. Against Creon's law, Antigone maintains "The law I live by is the oldest law. […] My law, the law, wounds the life of no one" (27). Here, Tóibín returns to the idea of natural law in *The Heather Blazing*, and Antigone's law, overtaken by Ismene, becomes a representative of such. In this claim to a higher ideal of law, Antigone subsumes Ismene, Eurydice and Haemon to resist the cruelty of Creon and they do so predominantly through an epistemic search for truth.

Truth thus becomes a site of contest and resistance throughout *Pale Sister*. At the end of Scene 2, Ismene problematizes power claims to knowledge and truth:

> Out there in the world the story of my sister is known, as though knowledge—knowledge—were somehow solid, considered, fully reliable, unsullied by man's need, distant from stories and fables and legends. Unsullied by truth.
> Truth, yes, truth.
> I can hear my sister laugh at the thought of truth. (18)

This comment scrutinizes at once the validity of the stories that have been told about Antigone, calling for a revision of the myth, and the objectivity to any claims to truth and knowledge as free from political power and ideological constraints. This rejection of the acceptance of truth at face value is the arena of Ismene's epistemic resistance. In contrast to Antigone who is totally sceptical that her truth might ever reach the surface and her voice be heard or validated, Ismene is the one who resists by surviving and making their truth public. That is also why she claims: "But when I fade, so will the truth. / And so I speak. That is why I speak" (13). For Ismene, her perseverance is the condition for her and Antigone's subjugated truth to survive. But one still wonders; what is this truth that may not have found expression in earlier versions? That Antigone buried her brother, defied the king's edict, appealed to a higher ideal of law, and was walled up alive and forced to end her life are apparent in all versions since Sophocles. What gets invented in Tóibín's versions, like many other contemporary ones, is the idea that Creon, out of his greed for power, provoked enmity between the brothers and prolonged the war. However, this idea is only expressed by Haemon and is not popular with Ismene who only wishes that

Haemon had not spoken in the first place. Ismene's truth seems to be how Creon out of his cruelty killed Antigone and was not open to counsel or communication, how greedy he was for power, and how deeply rooted this was in his soul. Also, she contests the idea that Antigone was out of her mind or shrill, which is in direct contrast with Sophocles' *Prologos* where Ismene claims that Antigone is "not in her right mind", irrational" (Fagles, ll. 115), "foolish" (Lloyd-Jones 15), *anous*, "ἄνους" (Loeb, ll.99) and that she "has no sense"[53]. In contrast, here, there is an intellectual and emotional alliance between the sisters in Tóibín's version.

Ismene's claim to disclose the truth also repeats Antigone's steps. Just as Antigone settles her brother's body to rest, risking her life by disobeying Creon's edict, Ismene wants to settle the truth of Antigone. As Dwan sees it, Ismene's story "is about laying something to rest; not only the body of her brother Polynices, as Antigone needed to do, but the blown-up picture of her sister" (Keating). This idea of "laying something to rest" becomes even more meaningful as Ismene is called upon by Antigone's ghost/dream vision precisely to do that. In *Looking Awry*, Žižek asks the simple question "why do the dead return?" and answers via Lacan that the dead return when they are not properly buried, when there is a disruption in the rite that ensures their symbolization. Therefore, the living dead return to settle symbolic accounts. Lacan's two examples in this respect are Antigone, with her insistence on burial, and Hamlet, whose father demands revenge (23). Considering these examples, *Pale Sister*'s opening scene is evocative of Honig's criticism of "the Hamletization of Antigone" (Honig 147). For Honig, the problem is Antigone being mainly represented as a figure of lamentation and melancholy instead of being self-expressive and resistant. Tóibín's version definitely resists this kind of Hamletization, only to introduce another kind of Hamletization. The play represents Antigone as a ghost that comes back to demand resistance so that she can maintain a state of rest. She bids Ismene to: "*Stand and accuse. Stare at him!*" (*Pale Sister* 12). Therefore, Antigone is not only asking for the burial rites for her brother, but also haunting Ismene and making a demand about the improper burial that she received and the culpability of the king. Just like Hamlet in search of the truth behind his father's killing, what motivates Ismene to speak truth to power is the demand symbolically placed on her by Antigone's ghost. Ismene acknowledges that Antigone, who "made a difference in the world" (12), can only persist as long as she as the witness speaks and prevents the truth from fading. Ismene is the timid one that does not look threatening at all, but especially for that reason, her assuming speech signals change. Antigone's demand of Ismene that she should "just

[53] τὸ γὰρπερισσὰ πράσσειν οὐκ ἔχει νοῦν οὐδένα. (ll. 67-68) (there is no sense in actions that exceed our powers). Also see Fagles, "It is madness, madness" (ll. 81).

stand" in silence is aimed at inducing Creon's fears at a time when the public has been silenced. Even though Ismene does not share Antigone's ambitions or courage, she becomes a strange double to her. Therefore, by carrying Antigone's truth and resistance, Ismene also lays her sister's soul to rest. The cyclical narrative reaches a point where "I" becomes "we", a movement of collective resistance. The final lines of the play echo the ending of Scene Six where Ismene finds the courage to speak up: "*Afraid. She is not afraid… I am not afraid… My sister… You… I am not afraid… I am not afraid.* / Not afraid" (40). Yet, one problem with Ismene's assuming speech and overcoming her fear comes up in Lisa Dwan's performance. Even though both Dwan and Tóibín insist that Antigone, as a figure for resistance, should be represented as sane, by the end of Scene Six, Ismene looks crazed, like she has really lost her sense of reality. Her eyes are wide open and reflect a feeling of shock, rather than resistance. The way she stammers "Not, Afray. You. I. Afray. No, I. Not. I am. […] I am not afraid of you" (38) can be interpreted as affected by the horror she feels and the courage she is trying to find, deep down in her being. However, we could also interpret this moment as an indication of Ismene crossing a boundary. Now she is no longer the Ismene with common sense, but totally mad with grief, like the mainstream representation of mad-with-grief-Antigone. This runs the risk of undermining the effect of the epistemic resistance which Ismene's alternative discourse assumed.

The play's title, *Pale Sister*, invokes various readings both at textual level and in terms of what gets invented through performance. In the play text, the Irish connotation of "pale" is immediately "the English Pale" (OED), the areas under English jurisdiction by the late 15th century. In that sense, Ismene as the obedient sister is under the rule of Creon, who stands for the colonial oppressor whereas Antigone is clearly "beyond the pale", in the sense of both being "beyond the bounds of" colonial rule and also "outside the limits of acceptable behaviour" (OED, "beyond the pale"). In that sense, not only Antigone represents the Irish rebel, but she also organises to get Ismene outside the Pale. Secondly, Ismene is pale in the sense that she is overshadowed by her sister's resistance, unnoticed in the margins, yet quietly observes others. It is her paleness that gets her to survive. The narrative can be seen as one in which Ismene's epistemic resistance is how she transcends her paleness, assuming light and colour by being subsumed by Antigone's discourse and call to action. Here, the meaning of her paleness approximates the word's secondary definitions in the OED, being "faint in lustre, dim" and "feeble, weak, faint, lacking in intensity, vigour, or robustness; timorous, without spirit". Therefore, Ismene needs to transcend her paleness as her fear and weakness because she knows that if she fades "so will the truth" (*Pale Sister* 13). But is Ismene only dim, timorous and weak in

relation to the radiance, strength and courage of Antigone? According to the OED, the word primarily suggests whiteness: "of a person's complexion […] of a whitish or ashen appearance; lacking healthy colour"; "Of colour: light in shade or hue; almost white", which complicates the racial undertones of the play. As Lara Cox deconstructs the racial implications of the concept of paleness from a postcolonial perspective and how this concept of paleness translates into the lighting effects within the production, she observes that the use of lighting shows Ismene move from more sombre tones to being bathed in white light, which is contrasted by the surrounding darkness of the studio. According to Cox, the strong use of white light is not racially neutral, but it repeats "a stereotype that is both racialized and gendered—white women as ethereal beings—plays a part in shaping what we take away from the BBC production of *Pale Sister*". This image of the white, ethereal women also draws on from Irish female mythological figures metaphorically associated with the Irish nation, such as Erin, Deirdre, and Kathleen Ni Houlihan[54]. Even though the play sets out to show Ismene as transcending a fear barrier by playing around her paleness, the dominant connotations of the word also undermine this attempt at resisting the dominant discourse. The emphasis is on resisting the tendency to set the two women in the play against one another; therefore, the paleness and radiance replace one another as more and more light falls on Ismene and Antigone ends up in the shadows as a ghost or a dream vision.

Even though she is critical of the racially charged use of lighting in *Pale Sister*, Lara Cox also praises its subversive potential to pave the way for multi-sensory forms of spectatorship. She comments that "the lighting in *Pale Sister* does serve to make starkly visible the bodily fluids [sweat, tears, nasal mucus, saliva] that erupt from Dwan as she is performing, and this opens up […] pathways for multisensorial forms of spectatorship", alongside "Dwan's vocal protests—figured through corporeal ejections". Likewise, in his review of the play, Gerald Berkowitz captures how the way Dwan performs to the camera evokes the sense of touch: "Her most recurring pose is leaning forward, one arm outstretched toward the camera, straining to reach and touch us". As Cox concludes that the multi-sensory engagement thus challenges normative ways of seeing[55], I would also add that Dwan's performative gestures alongside her sweat and tears also resist her easy consumption as an ethereal white woman, thus counterbalancing such stereotypes. Berkowitz stresses the exceptionality of Dwan's relationship with the camera: "Hers

[54] The mythological character was also the subject of the William Butler Yeats and Lady Gregory's play, *Cathleen ni Houlihan* in 1902.

[55] Cox develops her analysis of *Pale Sister* from a discussion of multi-sensorial or haptic experiences of spectatorship by Mahsa Foroughi, "The Blurred Line Between Film and Theatre: An Experience of Simon Stone's *Medea* at the Time of Pandemic." *Theatretimes.com.* 1 May 2021. <http://thetheatretimes.com/the-blurred-line-between-film-and-theatre-an-experience-of-simon-stones-medea-at-the-time-of-pandemic/>

is not a performance caught by a camera, but a performance to the camera. More than 90% of what we see is her looking directly at the camera, frequently in extreme close-up, so our dominant impression is of the fierce stare of her large unblinking eyes". By invoking the female gaze, both Dwan's acting and Nunn's direction resist the traditional representation of women subject to the male gaze. In "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", Laura Mulvey underscores how "[the] determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly" (19). By staring directly and performing to the camera, Dwan embodies the defiant female gaze and defies the expectation to appear for the male gaze. She refuses to "[turn] herself into an object -and most particularly an object of vision: a sight" (47) as John Berger, too, famously wrote in *Ways of Seeing*. Instead of being a spectacle, she insists on her agency as the one who looks and holds the gaze.

Dwan's defiant gaze is also supported by the play script. At the opening of the play, Antigone is characterized by her gaze as she visits her sister at night: "She turns, her eyes like words. Her gaze pierces the air like a howl" (11). The gaze is also central to her demand on Ismene as she says "Stand and accuse. Stare at him!" and "Stand and gaze, that is all I ask, pale sister" (12). In the course of the play, Ismene indeed moves from being the object of the male gaze to embodying the female gaze herself. She recounts how in the past she noticed Haemon "would stop and watch" her: "He would wait until I lifted my eyes to his and then he would lower his eyes" (16), clearly marking how Ismene found pleasure in being the object of Haemon's gaze. However, when everyone but Creon and Ismene are dead, Creon feels threatened when he catches Ismene's stare and snaps at her: "What did you say? Yes, you! What did you say?" and "I will not tolerate you mocking me" (37), an attitude which prompts Ismene to find courage and defy him by saying "I am not afraid of you" (38). At the very end, instead of being the object of the gaze, Ismene is finally able to "stand and stare", and as such embody the female gaze herself. Yet, this is not just a female gaze that shifts the agency from male to female, but it is what bell hooks terms "an oppositional gaze", "looks that [are] seen as confrontational, as gestures of resistance, challenges to authority" (115). hooks writes about how enslaved black people used to be punished for looking at the slave owners: "The politics of slavery, of racialized power relations, were such that the slaves were denied their right to gaze" (115). However, according to hooks the oppositional gaze persisted:

> I knew that the slaves had looked. That all attempts to repress our/black peoples' right to gaze had produced in us an overwhelming longing to look, a rebellious desire, an oppositional gaze. By courageously looking, we defiantly declared: "Not only will I stare. I want my look to change reality." Even in the worse

> circumstances of domination, the ability to manipulate one's gaze in the face of structures of domination that would contain it, opens up the possibility of agency. (116)

It is in hooks' sense of the oppositional gaze that Ismene, through Antigone's demand, embodies agency and defies Creon. As hooks underscores that "Spaces of agency exist for black people, wherein we can both interrogate the gaze of the Other but also look back, and at one another, naming what we see", and that in order to resist politically and to assert agency, it is necessary to politicise "looking" relations (116). Ismene, by learning to name how Creon instrumentalises fear to control and oppress, is able to transcend this fear barrier and by looking, claim agency for herself. In Dwan's acting, the oppositional gaze manifests itself by looking straight at the camera and the audience in order to announce its refusal to be reduced to being a spectacle. Not only does the actor just assume the gaze, but by actively gesturing forward, she also claims possession of her other senses, such as touch. Just like black people who display political resistance and agency through embodying the gaze, Dwan in her role as Ismene defies the easy interpretation of her role as the blonde female actor traditionally expected to appear for the male gaze. By displacing the male gaze, the play and the performance also shift the politics of looking into a site of resistance. This goes beyond simply changing the male gaze into the female gaze. Instead, they change the meaning making processes around looking, and redefine the gaze itself in the way bell hooks formulates it as oppositional. Thus, both in the textual plane of *Pale Sister* and the performative plane of Dwan's acting, Ismene's political resistance does not just replace the dynamics of looking and being looked at but seeks to transform the epistemic space that facilitates the oppressive and patriarchal politics of looking in the first place.

3. 3. Darren Murphy's *X'ntigone: after Sophocles*

Darren Murphy's *X'ntigone: after Sophocles* was produced by Prime Cut Productions and directed by Emma Jordon, premiered in February 2022 in the MAC in Belfast (playing between 2-13 February), and then transferred to the Abbey Theatre in Dublin (16-26 March 2022). It appeared in both North and South almost simultaneously, erasing the former differences between the politics of each, and addressing the island as a unified entity. The play text also immediately appeared in print the same year. Written during the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic and staged in the immediate aftermath of the lifting of the social distancing rules, the play engages directly with contemporary politics both in relation to the political management of the pandemic, and the

post-truth politics and right-wing populism that fed into it. This section discusses how the play mobilizes a sentiment for epistemic resistance in the face of a global disaster and the state politics that distort truth for more profit.

X'ntigone is a one-act two hander set in Thebes presented as a modern country. It is a thriller rather than a tragedy that requires some former knowledge of *Antigone* to make sense of the present conflict in the play. As befits a thriller, the plot is crowded with lots of intricacies and conspiracies that keep on changing sides. However, in the last analysis, it is also a reconfiguring of the old conflict between Creon and Antigone. The play takes the form of one long duologue between X'ntigone (pronounced "Zan-tigone", 10), who has recently changed her name from Antigone, and Creon. The action takes places in the immediate aftermath of a pandemic (called a plague in the play) caused by a virus that has lasted for two years just like Covid-19. Millions of people have died worldwide, and the economy has tanked. References to the recent vocabulary of Covid-19 such as quarantines, variants, face masks, frontline and key workers, nurses, vaccination, social distancing rules, and anti-vaxxers etc. have the function of underscoring the political urgency of the play's subject matter. At the opening of the play, it is understood that Creon is planning a Festival of Liberty to mark the ending of the pandemic. Eteocles (here an immunologist who devised the vaccine to end the pandemic) is reported to have died of the virus and Polyneices (here Theban Minister of Health) has been killed by Creon's snipers as he protested Creon's politics by climbing on top of a statue erected in memory of Eteocles and threatened to crush an ampoule in his pocket that contained a deadly mutation of the virus. From the discussion between Creon and X'ntigone, it is also understood that X'ntigone covered Polyneices' contaminated body with her jacket and was put in quarantine. The play opens with X'ntigone in her isolation cell, engaging in a heated discussion with Creon. He asks her to denounce Polyneices publicly so that peace can be restored, and the Festival can commence. X'ntigone, in organized rebellion with Creon's critics—Haemon included—declines to comply, but instead demands that her brother be buried immediately, and all statues in the country, which in fact belong to warmongers, slave holders, rapists etc. should be demolished so that a new era can commence. She announces that if her demands are not met, Haemon and others will enter from the seven gates of the city to infect the population with the new mutation of the virus, which they have stolen from state laboratories. Creon at first seems to vacillate and surrender, but with a sudden twist, orders all insurgents, including Haemon, to be shot on the spot. He also reveals that the ampoules that contain the mutation are made with a special resistant glass and cannot be broken with human force, something X'ntigone, Haemon and the rest had been

unaware of. Having sacrificed his own son, Creon is still cruel and victorious as he goes off to his press conference. X'ntigone is left alone in desperation. However, the play closes with a note of hope as X'ntigone's face looking at her tablet is mirrored and multiplied in the multimedia screen covering the stage area with the faces of dozens or hundreds of young women of the city scrolling desperately on their screens.

The stage directions state that the action is set in the ruins of an ancient city, but it is also a basement room, in the middle of which stands a soundproof Perspex square box that serves as the quarantined isolation cell X'ntigone is imprisoned in. Throughout the performance, her voice can only be heard through a microphone if and when Creon "unmutes" it. The play opens with X'ntigone seated on the bed in her cell. As soon as Creon enters, she goes to the intercom and starts speaking, but she cannot be heard as she is muted. Soon, it turns out that the intercom is not even working, but her mic is operated by Creon's phone which acts as remote. When she speaks, the audience can only hear "her miked voice, in mid-flow, over a loud blast of howl-around" (3). Not only X'ntigone's real voice is never heard at all, but also her mic is controlled by Creon, which becomes quite ironic since the play is so much engaged with X'ntigone's narrative, her version of the story, and her point of view, or those of all who have been silenced and pushed out of history, or in other words, the alternative epistemologies of the oppressed. Thus, the possibility that these voices can ever be heard is ruled out by the action on the stage. Creon continuously disappears in the shadowy areas of the basement whenever he mutes X'ntigone, and he remains unobserved by her as long as he wishes to. Murphy describes the idea behind the Perspex box as "halfway between a panopticon and a peepshow" ("Acknowledgements", *X'ntigone* xv). It evokes Jeremy Bentham's panopticon, a transparent prison cell that can be monitored all around at all times, yet the observer remains unobserved, which became Foucault's model for analysing surveillance in modern states. However, at the same time, the reference to "peep show" invites a question of voyeurism involved in the act of the spectacle itself.

The first novelty Murphy introduces in *X'ntigone* is the change of genre from tragedy to thriller. Although it is a thriller based on a tragedy, this change, in a way, points toward a direction similar to George Steiner's theory concerning the death of tragedy in the modern, secular world. This is no longer the tragic world of *Antigone* characterized by formal elements such as hamartia, recognition, and catharsis; or Antigone's insistence on public mourning, her public verbal defiance of the king; or Creon's too late recognition of his fatal error. There is no

place for a Chorus that can function as the collective voice of the people and that which falls outside the discourses of either Creon or Antigone. Instead, the play depicts two warring discourses, one dominant and the other rebellious, and it is this binary that is played out. However, in place of a resolution, it concludes with the reinforcement of hegemonic positions, while allowing some space for X'ntigone to be an ethical and rebellious element in each young woman's psyche[56]. As the tragedy is renounced in favour of the thriller, the subtitle of the play, "after Sophocles", points toward more than a temporal sequence. Instead of indicating that X'ntigone is historically posterior to Sophocles' *Antigone* or repeats it in any way, does the emphasis indicate that the play is post-Sophoclean or even a post-tragedy? The play aims to dismantle the mythical tradition Sophoclean tragedy is based on, thus attempting to overthrow its canonical function through a counter-canonical rewriting. Darren Murphy explains that his aim is to respond to the tradition of adapting *Antigone*, which he makes clear in his video clip for the MAC: "The idea behind that is there being dozens and dozens of versions of Antigone. It is a story that resonates across the ages, and my Antigone has a kind of awareness of how her story has been told and retold, and particularly told by men, and there's something about that that she rejects because she wants to change the trajectory of that narrative" (Murphy, "X'ntigone"). By saying this, Murphy makes it clear that his intention is to come up with a feminist version of Antigone that aims at changing the heroine's fate by giving her more agency. The irony here is that Murphy can also be seen as another man retelling the story of Antigone, especially when what is at stake in the play is whether X'ntigone can indeed change the direction of the narrative about her. According to X'ntigone, who stands for not only the rebellion of youth, but also "a radical world vision" vis a vis "old world order" as suggested by the play's press release ("World Premiere of X'ntigone"), the time is ripe for changing the past, and she sees a possibility to remake the world after it has come to a halt with the pandemic. In that sense, X'ntigone approaches the pandemic as a state of war or civil war. So, the question arises in terms of how to emerge victorious from the state of ruin created by such a devastating war, to which X'ntigone and Creon have contrasting answers.

In *X'ntigone*, there are three major themes that stand out in raising the issue of epistemic resistance, and all of them have the effect of striving to change the past to envision the future differently: Firstly, X'ntigone's act of changing her name; secondly, her list of demands, which are the burial of Polyneices' body and the dismantling of all the statues in the country; and

[56] This brings to mind Conor Cruise O'Brien's first article, in which he argued that Antigone is a destructive but ethical and necessary quality within each individual in the society.

thirdly, how truth becomes a site of debate between X'ntigone and Creon, suggestive of a post-truth era in politics. By post-truth era, I refer to Sergio Sismondo's distinction to characterize a new era of politics that have been on the rise for the last decades but gained prominence with Trump's election campaign and the Brexit process with "fake news, […] conspiracy theories and outright lies placed front and centre" ("Post-truth?" 3). According to Sismondo, the following qualities characterize post-truth: in contrast to ordinary lying that has always been habitual for politicians, this era does not just bend the truth, but it is not interested in truth and facts at all. Public figures no longer fear the consequences of lying, and "significant segments of the public display an inability to distinguish fact and fiction". "The emotional resonances and feelings generated by statements", as well as "Opinions, especially if they match what people already want to believe" matter more than facts. "Bullshit, casual dishonesty and demagoguery are increasingly accepted parts of political and public life", and "There has been a loss of power and trust in traditional media, leading to more fake news, news bubbles and do-it-yourself investigations". ("Casting a Wider Net" 588). From within this context of post-truth politics, even though X'ntigone and Creon's debate on truth reaches a resolution as Creon admits his lies and deceit, it does not become the ground for any political redress, change, or justice. Truth, as such, is unable to destabilize power.

By changing her name, X'ntigone aims "to intercept her own narrative as it's been passed down to her" (Murphy, "X'ntigone"), and change her legacy; "reject all the versions of [her] story that until now history has ascribed to—" (*X'ntigone*, 10). In algebraic terms, she wants to stop being an "A", "the known variable", which Antigone is suggestive of; and replace the "A" with "X", the unknown variable (11) so that her fate can cease to be predictable, and she can break the narrative in which she has always been destined to die. The act of changing her name, as the central emphasis in the play, also marks the epistemic shift in the play in relation to Sophocles' *Antigone*. Starting from the title and central to the action, X'ntigone's self-identification signals the epistemic resistance at the heart of the political resistance in the play. It denotes not only making epistemic resistance central to the adaptation, but also resisting Sophocles' tragedy epistemically by aspiring to change the central narrative there, and thus marking the new play as a counter-canonical gesture in itself.

The play is critical of not only Sophocles' *Antigone*, but the whole tragic tradition that sets the tone for established narratives. X'ntigone is dismissive of the tradition whereby the Athenians used to set these plays in Thebes as a foil to their own city governed by democracy:

"We don't do democracy, but we do a nice little line in charismatic psychos. That's Thebes. A sociopathic theme park. Athenians can't imagine it happening in their democracy, but they can imagine it here" (23). Clearly, the allusion here is to the depiction of Thebes as a culturally closed, aristocratic, and therefore anti-democratic setting in the Attic imagination—as a foil or an Other to Athens' self-image as the cradle of democracy and open culture, which was powerfully outlined by Froma Zeitlin in "Thebes: Theatre of Self and Society in Athenian Drama" (130-167). From a postcolonial perspective, this also parallels Ireland's position vis a vis Britain, being the Other to Britain's self-image. Consequently, the play addresses the Otherization it finds at the heart of tragedy from a contemporary perspective, and by rejecting this narrativization, aims to change its legacy.

Through her self-identification, X'ntigone challenges not only her own story, but the whole mythical tradition that lays the foundation for Attic tragedies. She is critical of all those stories that get passed down to the next generation: "Daddies killing daddies and then making babies with their Mas. Babykilling mamies. […] Mothers and fathers and brothers and sisters. Incest and rape and infanticide. And *family*" (Murphy, *X'ntigone* 23). Instead of succumbing to this narrative, X'ntigone sets out to challenge the family *Atë*, which she can feel running through her, as well. She comments: "It's my blood too and I feel its poison, coursing through me" (23). In that sense, she denounces Antigone as not just her name, but a part written for her (24). She interprets this narrative as: "the sister must die, however the story is told, the sister must die, that's the price, the payoff, it's beating in my blood, it's the rhythm of my breathing until it screams: stop! And I do. And I'm throwing up on the pavement outside the cenotaph, puking up two thousand years of stories, that have wormed their way into my gut" (24). Besides, it is not just her. She sees Antigones all around the city, in different forms: "All those Antigones with their story etched into their faces. Into *my* face. They all knew what they had to do…. girl refuses, girl dies. The same cheekbones, the same eyes—they are me: I am them" (24). She intends to change her role not only for herself, but for the multitudes that have to succumb to these stories. X'ntigone's rejection of her story and her willingness to write an alternative one is her epistemic resistance in the face of her usual fate unfolding before her. In that respect, *X'ntigone* reflects Lisa Dwan's sentiment of rejecting the part written for Antigone from a misogynist, patriarchal mindset ("A New Antigone"). X'ntigone declares that she refuses to play along by telling Creon that she will not accept his version of Antigone now, by saying "And now you're going to tell them another one, aren't you? About me. When I'm not here, or on mute. But I won't compete anymore. I won't play that role" (24-25). Oddly enough, she passes the role

of agency to Creon by saying that he will be the one to decide on what happens next. She believes that by obliging Creon through threats, she can get him to author fundamental changes to the government of the city, which turns out to be illusionary and doomed to failure. In that sense, the play's proposal for change is undermined by its own narrative and the figure of X'ntigone falls short of realizing her potential for agency.

It is noteworthy that no matter how detailed an explanation X'ntigone gives to Creon as to why she changes her name, Creon remains dismissive to the end, and tries to brush her off: "And we should definitely get into all that, after the recording. Definitely. Because I am really interested. Seriously. The naming of names, the gender fluid stuff, all of that. Fascinating stuff" (10). In fact, not only is he not interested in X'ntigone's politics or her repeated emphasis that it is not about gender, but he is hostile, too; all he is trying to do is to refuse to acknowledge X'ntigone's right to identify herself, her right to self-determination. This avoidance lies at the core of the dismissive attitude; however, the truth is that "it offends [his] tongue" because he does not think that X'ntigone gets to choose who she is (25). After X'ntigone's many insistent demands that he must say her adopted name, only in the very end, when he is victorious and his enmity toward X'ntigone is apparent, he addresses her with it: "That's enough now, *X'ntigone*. That what you want? For me to say your playground name? Okay, I'll give you that, *X'ntigone*" (43). Thus, he can only call her X'ntigone in a condescending tone, still refusing to acknowledge her agency. As a post-truth era politician, he undermines the idea that agency or political power can be related to rhetoric and be part of epistemic resistance. This is also the beginning of his last soliloquy that ends the play without X'ntigone having the chance to speak again. Immediately afterwards, Creon reveals that he lied about the jacket X'ntigone wears. It is not cleaned and disinfected as he claimed in the beginning but is riddled with the new strain. Also, he has had an antidote put in the jacket's pocket, but it is made of the special unbreakable material. This time he imposes his demand on X'ntigone that she denounce her brother, or else the new strain will give her a painful death. After saying this, Creon leaves the stage. However, he reappears on the screen in his press meeting, thanking everyone, with tears streaming. In the meanwhile, X'ntigone spits her teeth on the floor while trying to break the ampoule. Bloodied and beaten, she sits down and starts scrolling on her tablet. The close of the play comes with the stage starting to light up with the faces of young women one by one that eventually fill out the whole space (47). Here the emphasis on scrolling on the tablet is suggestive of the general public accessing alternative news sources in the social media in opposition to the traditional media for which "there has been a loss of power and trust" (Sismondo, "Casting a Wider Net" 588). In

that respect, it invites a hopeful reading, suggestive of the invincibility of Antigone even if X'ntigone is crushed. However, on another note, it can also be suggestive of a total defeat. Since there is no change instigated by the faces lit up by screens, it can also be indicative of doom scrolling and that all those Antigones in the streets will have to succumb to their fate as—unlike in Sophocles' version— Creon emerges victorious and assumes leadership.

The second theme that brings up the issue of epistemic resistance is X'ntigone's list of demands, which are the burial of Polyneices' body and the dismantling of all the statues in the country. The burial is just one item in a list of demands by the rebels, for which X'ntigone becomes the spokesperson, and only debated as part of a larger discussion which is the legitimacy of "weaponizing the plague" for political ends (13). But furthermore, she claims that Creon has weaponised Polyneices' dead body to control the people. Contrarily, she wants to start a revolution because she believes in the possibility to remake the world, which she saw even in the moment of the plague when everything came to an abrupt halt. As Creon will not give in, X'ntigone says that they will oblige him. Here, it is also important that X'ntigone is not alone in her plan, but she acts with seven others, whose identities remain ambiguous except Haemon's, and Creon refers to the rest as "Argive insurgents". However, the seven of X'ntigone do not come from outside, as in Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes*, but, rather, they are insiders who depart from the city centre toward the seven gates of the city. Haemon takes the place of Polyneices in *Seven*, thus changing the importance of the figure of Polyneices in the play. Whereas Sophocles' Antigone refuses to comment on whether Polyneices was right or wrong and is only interested in her right to bury her dead, X'ntigone explicitly condemns her brother's action politically by saying she "was against what he did" (27). On the other hand, Haemon, who takes a Polyneices-like position by attacking the city from one of the seven gates, is X'ntigone's ally. X'ntigone and Haemon, think that not only Polyneices should have been buried, but they also "could not support a regime that valorised such cruelty" (35), so they decide to start a revolution to overtake Creon. So, for X'ntigone, the matter is less about burying her brother than changing the regime that rules unjustly. In order to do that, she and her allies come up with their second demand, to dismantle the statues which represent "an army of rapists and slave traders frozen in stone" (16), starting from that of Eteocles and Laius.

X'ntigone's iconoclasm is another effort to rewrite the past to change the future. Her search for a different narrative than the dominant state narrative is simultaneously a rewriting of the myth from which the Sophoclean tragedy is drawn. X'ntigone has a different story to tell.

She wants all statues removed because they are all "imperialists and warmongers" (30), "an army of rapists and slave traders frozen in stone, everywhere you fucking look, savages in topcoats and ermine, and canes and—" (16). Likewise, from X'ntigone's point of view, Laius is no longer the founding father who fell victim to patricide, but "a child rapist", "a paedophile", as he raped and abducted Chrysippus, the young son of king Pelops who hosted Laius when he was in trouble[57], as well as "a criminal" (for attempting to kill Oedipus) (31). In return, she also offers alternative readings of those who "served the state equally" but have been discredited and erased from history: Oedipus, Polyneices, Jocasta and Euridice. X'ntigone's rewriting of the myth is an act of epistemic resistance to challenge what the dominant discourse imposes on the society as truth. What she suggests is to change this narrative so as to enable the envisioning of a new future. Therefore, her epistemic resistance is not about the past, but predominantly about changing the present and shaping the future. In that sense, too, it is a politically urgent act. The dismantling of the statues is of course another reference to the contemporary events that took place in the UK in 2020-2021 and were hot topics during and after the Black Lives Matter campaign. As the dismantling of the statues cannot be reduced to the physical removal of symbols of a shameful past but must be viewed as part of Britain's confrontation with its colonial legacy and process of decolonization, X'ntigone acknowledges this process as a symbolic act of epistemic resistance. in terms of standing up to its colonial past and changing its legacy to build a democratic future.

Thirdly, the warring discourses of Creon and X'ntigone make up most of the play. They disagree on almost everything. According to Creon, Eteocles died fighting the plague while he was leading the research team and devising the vaccine. However, X'ntigone's account is that "he caught plague off one of his whores. Partying when he should be isolating with his family" (16). This is again resonant with the criticism of British government members during the pandemic, especially Prime Minister Boris Johnson and his "Partygate" scandal in 2022. X'ntigone also claims that the statue was put up because "Eteocles lobbied for the patent for the vaccine to go to the company [Creon] consult[ed] for. And wrangled the Track and Trace app tender to go to [Creon's] cronies in office" (16). In short, she accuses Creon of profiting from the pandemic, and Eteocles of being his accomplice, therefore criticising the current capitalist handling of the pandemic as a source of profit for governments and pharmaceutical companies. Another disagreement becomes apparent in interpreting Polyneices' action. According to Creon, he intended to crush the ampoules containing the virus and throw them into the crowd gathering in

[57] See Euripides *Fragments*: *Oedipus-Chrysippus, Other Fragments*, Ed. and Trans. Christopher Collard and Martin Cropp, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 2008, pp.459-471.

the square, so he had to be stopped. According to X'ntigone, he was going to smash them on the statue (15). Finally, they present differing views in the interpretation of Laius as to whether he is a great leader or a child rapist (31), or whether statues symbolize people or ideals (40).

For most of the play, until the very last scene, the disagreement appears to be between Creon's statism and X'ntigone's individualism (34). In Medina's terminology, the epistemic friction between Creon and X'ntigone can be classified as one between positive (resisting oppressive power mechanisms) and negative (counter-resistance of the power holder) epistemic resistances. However, in the last scene, after Creon orders the insurgents including Haemon to be shot, his discourse also changes and reveals the post-truth politician that he indeed is; pragmatically lying and bending the truth at the expense of killing people as long as it serves his own interests. Thus, Creon admits having lied about the jacket, which he had claimed was disinfected. Now, he also admits other crimes: that he infected X'ntigone with the jacket, that neither Polyneices nor the insurgents could have broken the ampoules and infected the people because the ampoules were made of unbreakable material. So, it turns out that he had been lying all along on almost every issue. Polyneices and the seven insurgents—including Haemon—did not have to be killed at all; there was no possibility for them to infect the population; the reason why X'ntigone was quarantined was not the risk of infection, and he himself infected X'ntigone deliberately. Besides, he threatens X'ntigone by saying that the virus will give her a painful death and has her choose between denouncing her brother and getting treatment, or a painful death. It is not only to X'ntigone that Creon lies, but he deceives the public at large using state power and mechanisms, characteristic of the post-truth era. He hides from the public that one of the Seven was his son, but instead he has the televisions announce that six insurgents were shot dead by the government's counterterrorist squad and a soldier died in the crossfire (42). Thus, Creon manages to dissociate his son's and consequently his own name from the terrorist attack. This example demonstrates how he distorts the facts to suit his political agenda even when confronted with the grief of losing his own son. The declaration made through the news report adds to the sentiment of loss of trust in mainstream media in post-truth. On top of all these final statements that reveal his character, Creon ends his soliloquy by washing his hands in the basin whilst humming "The Red Flag", symbolically washing his hands of his crimes and mocking any revolutionary sentiment that X'ntigone and others have, symbolized by the socialist anthem.

Finally, in spite of the villainization of Creon toward the ending of the play and truth appearing to be located on X'ntigone side, the question still remains: What is the function of

truth in relation to epistemic resistance in the play? Does it lead to any political awareness, let alone change? X'ntigone clearly has access to Creon's bigotry, but can she give voice to truth and claim to be on the right side? Analysing *X'ntigone* as a debate between the two warring discourses of X'ntigone and Creon, it is worthwhile noticing the characterization of these protagonists. On the one hand, from the start, X'ntigone is presented as a troubled young woman with a potential for self-harm, digging her nails on her arms already covered with scratch marks (3). She is anxious, nervous, and quite neurotic. On the other hand, Creon is portrayed as a paternalistic politician, slightly ridiculous and pragmatic. He addresses X'ntigone in an infantilizing manner, calling her "little lady" (4, 9, 44), and her politics as "playground politics" (15), but he is still presented as a loving uncle, who most probably does not understand his niece, but loves her nevertheless (6-7, 9). In that, the play resembles Anouilh's version that presents Creon doing his best to save his niece but facing total rejection from the adamant youth. Similarly, the conflict between X'ntigone and Creon is depicted as a generational clash between new and old values, summarized in the press release for the play as "political expediency meets the voice of a generation who want to tear down the power structures that have ill-served a crumbling state" ("X'ntigone").

The problem is that X'ntigone is presented as a standard terrorist who is not exactly the same as a freedom fighter in the public imagination. Even though she claims that she has never approved of what Polyneices did, i.e., to protest with a mutation of the virus in his hand, she ends up doing the same thing. When she confronts Creon, she threatens him with the same ampoule that contains the virus. Likewise, her comrades, Haemon and others, have the same intention of spreading the virus among the public if their demands are not met by Creon. What they do is to blackmail Creon by threatening him with contaminating the population. In short, they are destructive forces, impossible to sympathize with even if they are arguably unleashed by Creon's faulty politics. In his review of the play, Michael Lloyd is critical of this point that "The play does not supply any context for an action which is almost as evil as it is possible to imagine" (78). Likewise, Chris O'Rourke and the anonymous reviewer of *No More Workhouse* also agree that it is hard to feel empathy for X'ntigone's actions. Given that this play was staged at a time of pandemic, it was very repulsive to witness the representation of some young people deliberately spreading a virus among a population whatever their motivations might have been. Indeed, X'ntigone even sounds not only ridiculous and infantile, but also disgusting when she threatens Creon by saying that Haemon and the others will be smudging their bodily fluids on public trains

to transmit the virus (29). The only function of this threat could be to increase the level of paranoia and social distrust already triggered by the pandemic.

It is even unclear what causes that indignation in her. Certainly, she is critical of the lack of attention for care homes and the invisibility of most care givers during the pandemic: "They clapped all the nurses, but nobody clapped the carers, or the psychiatrists, or the social workers going into people's homes […] without masks or protection in the first months" (21). That is why she exclaims "I am going to show you what *real* community looks like" (27). Yet, these are not sufficient cause—if there could ever be one—to spread a variant of the virus to the population. Interestingly, X'ntigone, as a coded message to tell the Seven to stop their action plan, asks Creon to include in his public declaration the following sentence: "*The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house*" (37). As the play alludes to Audre Lorde's famous article, which underscores that feminism cannot change the oppressive patriarchal system using its hegemonic racist and homophobic premises but should start from changing the whole discourse by mobilizing the differences among women to turn them into strengths, it advocates for epistemic resistance in itself. However, alluding to this seminal revolutionary work within feminist criticism is not sufficient to clarify the muddled politics represented by the figure of X'ntigone or the play. Critical of the forced exposition in the play, Rory O'Sullivan writes that it "wants everything but achieves nothing –Greek tragedy, Covid-19, Audre Lorde –the worst of all worlds, a play of ticked boxes authored by committee". Similarly, the anonymous reviewer in *No More Workhorse* finds it "difficult to understand what [X'ntigone] actually stands for. According to O'Rourke, "Dressed up in activist anarchy, […] Murphy's script might talk the political talk, but it does not walk the political walk". Besides, most reviewers raise the issue that too many issues are packed in the play (Meany, McCormack, Quinn, O'Rourke). In that respect, the problem with the play is the overabundance of the issues and events crammed into the play, unable to find an outlet politically or gain audience sympathy.

As opposed to the recklessness and irresponsibility on X'ntigone's part, Creon wins admiration at least by showing some backbone by saying "You think I'd capitulate to terrorists?" (28), a praiseworthy reaction from a pragmatist politician whose son's life is in danger. In the end, when X'ntigone is shocked to understand that Haemon and others got killed, it is Creon who utters the almost Foucauldian commentary on the nature of power: "Change things. Make stuff better. Fix the world. But you don't understand power. You can't control it, only ride it. Power is conditional, provisional, arbitrary. It's a shapeshifter, a mirror that shows you what you

are" (40). He also gives voice to a kind of social Darwinism, equating the oppression caused by political power with a natural law, which is also backed by the action in the play:

> Power cannot be created or destroyed. The total amount of it in the universe remains constant. It just changes from one form to another, like energy. An immutable law. The strong dominate the weak and the smart dominate the strong. Isn't it better to leave it in the hands of those who know its corrupting allure, its intoxicating pull, rather than in the hands of some malicious and vengeful children who will destroy everything they don't understand because they think by killing it it'll go away? (41)

It is tempting to answer Creon's question with a full yes, especially when X'ntigone is unable to answer him, but mutters a few words when her mic is muted by Creon again (42). Unfortunately, the play ends up validating a defeatist politics by showing the oppressive political system as invulnerable and invincible both discursively and politically. Trapped in the binary between Creon and X'ntigone, the play is unable to bring the discussion of epistemic justice into fruition and favours right-wing populism. That is also why in the *Guardian* review of the play, Helen Meany concludes that "It is a nihilistic credo, bleakly shifting the moral balance of the play's arguments, so that the only choices left are between different degrees of destructiveness". This is drastically different from Sophocles where the whole action is built on Creon's final recognition, which leaves ample space for alternative and critical discourses to emerge.

Engaged as they are with the leadership problems in the post-truth era and international politics, Tóibín and Murphy add a renewed feminist form of epistemic resistance to *Antigone* adaptations in Ireland. What they do differently from earlier versions is to shift the focus of the play not simply back to Antigone or other female characters, but to a preoccupation with how Antigone's truth gets to be told as opposed to the dominant discourse of the sovereign. Therefore, their stress is more on the epistemic resistance against sovereign forms of oppression than their predecessors. They both aim to opt for a feminist voice centring on the possible narratives of silenced women. However, *X'ntigone* also ends up destroying the possibility that Colm Tóibín wanted to raise as to Antigone being in the right (Tóibín, "Sister Act") and reduces her to a terrorist figure. When compared to a terrorist, the pragmatist politician who will claim that the end justifies the means, appears in a better light. Therefore, the play not only is in agreement with Conor Cruise O'Brien's idea that the only thing to arise from civil disobedience is bloodshed, but it also ends up reinforcing the conviction that pure idealism and commitment to truth are destructive. Just as O'Brian asked whether it was worth a handful of dust on Polyneices, one wonders if X'ntigone's critique justifies her deeds. Therefore, Murphy's play falls

short of fulfilling its ambitions as it concludes with a return to pragmatism and away from epistemic resistance.

Chapter IV

"Come, death!": *Antigone* as Necroresistance in Turkey

Turkey may not be one of the places with many new versions of *Antigone* such as Britain or Ireland, but it is striking that adopting and adapting *Antigone* in Turkey immediately becomes a political statement against contemporary forms of sovereignty. *Antigone*'s performative politics at times exceed theatrical space and extend into political discourse. This is probably not surprising considering the military and civil dictatorships that have been holding the country in their grip, with the unburied, disappeared, and murdered people dominating public imagination. In this context, staging *Antigone*, a play that has the canonical status of a classic safely anchors the politically vulnerable, who are continually threatened with being labelled as terrorists, to a distant past from where modernity may derive its historical lessons. Engaging with the ancient tragedy with a mind to the political present is perceived as a counter-sovereign strategy that opens up an epistemic space for intelligibility or legitimacy which is derived from its canonical or classical status. At the same time, these engagements are much more openly invested in death-worlds created by necropolitics compared to versions produced in the West. The resulting plays reflect issues around death as a political strategy, i.e., necroresistance.

In this chapter, I start from examples outside theatre to showcase how the play and its protagonist are taken up for the purpose of carving out an epistemic space for political activism in relation to necropolitics. After briefly summarizing Turkey's problem of the unburied dead in the recent years, I take up two discussions around political hunger strikes that use the example of *Antigone* to argue for necroresistance against sovereign state power. Then, I discuss theatrical adaptations, and I offer a detailed reading of two recent plays, Şahika Tekand's *Eurydice's Cry* (2007) in relation to necroresistance and Berfin Zenderlioğlu's *Antigone2012* (2012) that focuses on enforced disappearances in Turkey, Kurdistan.

4. 1. Mobilizing *Antigone* Outside Theatre

The year 2015 marked a new period of violence in Turkey: IS suicide bombings during political rallies in Diyarbakır, Suruç and Ankara killed hundreds of civilians as Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic, started losing popular support. Clashes began between Kurdish militants and the Turkish military in Kurdish towns, leading to state emergency decrees that imposed curfews and heavy violence on civilians. The government started appointing trustees in 28 Kurdish municipalities, arresting and replacing democratically elected mayors and Kurdish politicians. This meant a return to the state of emergency that prevailed in the region in the 1990s and the consequent violence it gave rise to, which was especially striking in terms of dead bodies exposed and lying unburied in the streets, reminiscent of *Antigone*. To cite a few examples, in August, after she was killed in armed warfare in Muş, the dead body of a Kurdish guerrilla fighter, Ekin Wan, was tortured, stripped bare, and displayed on social media. In September, during the Emergency Rule, a 10-year-old child, Cemile Çağırga, was shot by military fire in her home. As it was not safe to go out, her mother had to keep her body in the refrigerator for days so the body would not rot and stink in the heat. The same month, Aziz Güler, a Turkish freedom fighter who died in Rojava, Syria while fighting against IS was refused repatriation, and his body had to wait for 59 days at the Syrian-Turkish border before finally receiving burial in Istanbul. In October, Hacı Lokman Birlik, a Kurdish activist and actor aged 24 was first executed by the police and then his body was dragged through the streets of Şırnak tied behind an armoured police vehicle. On 28 November, Tahir Elçi, Kurdish lawyer and Chairman of Diyarbakır Bar Association, was assassinated during a press conference in Sur, Diyarbakır. In December, in the Kurdish town of Silopi, Tayibet İnan, a civilian aged 57 and mother of 11 was shot by military snipers on her way home from her neighbours. İnan's dead body, which her children could not get due to snipers not ceasing fire, lay in the street for 7 days. The unburied dead, the violent atmosphere in the country, and the unanswered demands of justice have not found much theatrical or literary expression as yet; however, the performative role of *Antigone* even exceeds theatre and is mobilized by human rights activists.

4. 1. 1. Antigone as Hunger Striker

Even though 2015 is a recent example of how political violence gave rise to the number of the unburied dead, the violence in the country has precedents that have long reminded various authors of the figure of Antigone. In "When Antigone is a Man: Feminist 'Trouble' in the Late Colony" (2016), Nükhet Sirman writes about Hüsnü Yıldız's hunger strike and death fast in demanding his guerrilla brother's remains in 2011. Hüsnü Yıldız's brother Ali Yıldız was killed in Dersim in 1997; however, his body was declared "lost". After legal procedures failed him and with strong evidence that his brother was buried in a mass grave located on military grounds in Dersim, Hüsnü Yıldız decided to go on a hunger strike demanding the excavation of this mass grave. At the end of 62 days of hunger strike / death fast, he managed to get the mass grave excavated and was able to retrieve his brother's remains[58]. During his hunger strike campaign, Yıldız also wrote an open letter asking for support from Turkey's intellectuals, to which Sennur Sezer responded in a newspaper column "Antigone lives in these lands" referring to Yıldız as "An Antigone in Dersim" in *Evrensel*. Sezer claimed that "after 2500 years Antigone still lives and still struggles for the right to a tomb"[59] (qtd in Sirman 196). In addition to Sezer, Sirman also notes that Ayşe Kilimci's article, "Indeed, where are you Antigone?" [Sahi, Neredesin Antigone?] centres on the same subject via the same theme. Kilimci, in reference to Sezer's column, discussed Antigone's relevance as having defended the right of the dead to have a grave and having been killed for this. She concluded with an address to Antigone: "Indeed, where are you Antigone?" [Sahi neredesin Antigone?]. Sirman also mentions a reply to Kilimci's article by Kadriye Ceylan, mother of disappeared Tolga Baykal Ceylan, published in the same website, saying "I am here and have been here since August 2004 (the date her son disappeared)"[60] (qtd in Sirman 207). Ceylan also invited the readers to join her efforts and "become one more Antigone" so that she can be "the last Antigone" who has to suffer punishment through prohibition of burial. With this call, Ceylan extends the Antigone metaphor to the proliferation of the figure as organized and collective political agents. The Antigonization of the hunger striker in search of the disappeared is joined by the mother of another disappeared and is immediately multiplied in a new metaphor.

[58] News report of the excavation can be found on Milliyet website: <https://www.milliyet.com.tr/gundem/toplu-mezardan-kardesi-cikti-1505657>
[59] Sirman's translation as quoted in her essay.
[60] Sirman's translation.

Yet, the focus of Sirman's article lies elsewhere as suggested by its title: gender politics as implied in "Feminist 'Trouble'" alluding to Butler, and necropolitics as implied by "the late colony" alluding to Mbembe. According to Sirman, when a man is hailed as Antigone, the gender transgression highlights that he is "feminized in the sense that he becomes as vulnerable as a woman" (199). But this vulnerability is not a sign of weakness, on the contrary, it is what mobilizes social movements as the revolutionary power at the bottom of the social hierarchy. Thus, for Sirman, Yıldız is a subversive figure as a feminized male Antigone and "the disruption caused to gender identity transgresses both gender and kinship roles" (198). Here, Sirman's sentence somehow mirrors Butler's idea in *Antigone's Claim*, but lacks the crucial part, i.e., that Antigone, in her act, transgresses these norms (6). For Butler, Antigone's gender is only meaningful in the sense that she embodies the aberration of the norm as a woman who is found to act contrary to what is expected from a woman and subverts the sovereign's speech acts (6). In that sense, what approximates Yıldız to Antigone is not occupying the female position per se but mobilizing performative politics to make counter-sovereign statements, which can be found in Yıldız's own words in his letter, quoted at length by Sirman: "My family does not possess tanks and cannon. We do not have the power to enact laws nor make [public] decisions. We have our bodies. So it is that I have turned my body into a weapon of struggle and started a hunger strike. Because I do not have any other weapon"[61] (qtd in Sirman 196). Yıldız's illocutionary speech act, "I have turned my body into a weapon" against the actual weapons of the state closely resembles Antigone's self-positioning against Creon through her speech acts. The performative function of the hunger strike becomes meaningful only in the context of a social contract in which the state has the duty to protect and preserve the well-being of its citizens. While the state is confronted to confirm its biopolitical and necropolitical role as the one that determines who is to live and who is to die, Yıldız poses a challenge to the normative order in which the state kills the armed and protects the unarmed. He destabilizes the state hegemony on determining life and death. He becomes an Antigone not only in his wish to bury a dead brother, who is an enemy of the state, but also in his resistance to be contained within the state's confines of intelligibility, which, like Antigone, he carries out through his speech acts. Consequently, the performative politics that make Yıldız an Antigone in the Butlerian sense can be discussed in relation to the second part of Sirman's argument on necropolitics as "a life subjected to the power of death only possible in conditions of the late colony" (195). However, Sirman is unable to see the politics of Yıldız's (and thus Antigone's) necroresistance:

[61] The in-text quotation here is Sirman's translation. The letter in Turkish is also quoted in full in Sennur Sezer's column "Antigone bu topraklarda yaşıyor", *Evrensel*, 30 July 2011.

> What these actions [that place the actor in a position of vulnerability, such as hunger strikes] undertake in response to necropolitics is to remove the repressive policies from the domain of the political and place them within the domain of the moral. This amounts to an attempt to delegitimize the state itself, as it is presently constituted. The immorality of denying a proper burial becomes equivalent to letting a man die a little every single day in full view of the public. (197)

Contrary to Sirman, I argue that the ethical in the performative acts like hunger strikes is always already self-consciously political. In his letter, Yıldız does not only claim that he wants to find his brother's remains, but he acknowledges that he has to fight the state politically. Hunger strikers / death fasters such as Yıldız, resist the necropolitics of the state through what Banu Bargu terms "necroresistance", a specific modality of resistance that makes use of self-destructive practices and weaponize life (Starve and Immolate 27). Bargu, too, refers to the agents of necroresistance as "human weapons" who "forge their lives into weapons of political struggle by a resort to self-destructive techniques" (14). This political method that both resists the meaning making strategies of the state and aims to counter them, can be followed in Selçuk Kozağaçlı's discussion *vis a vis* Sophocles' *Antigone*.

4. 1. 2. Selçuk Kozağaçlı's Court Defence[62]

On 8 November 2022, Kozağaçlı, Lawyer and Chair of Progressive Lawyers Association [*Çağdaş Hukukçular Derneği*, ÇHD] and his 22 colleagues stood trial on the charge of being members of a terrorist organisation while the accusations against them centred around their law practices. During the court proceedings, which lasted for over 6 years and ended up with Kozağaçlı being sentenced to 13 years, the imprisoned lawyers went on hunger strikes to protest the unjust judiciary process. In 2020, one of the prosecuted lawyers, Ebru Timtik, died on the 238th day of her death fast which she had embarked protesting that her right to self-defence had been violated. As part of his defence speech, Kozağaçlı evoked *Antigone* in memory of Timtik.

Kozağaçlı started his speech by drawing an analogy between *Antigone* and their law practice in terms of burying, and thus defending the dead: "between 1996 and 2017, I attended the funerals of and buried 700 clients. […] I opened up mass graves, I collected bodies from coal mines and train stations. It is precisely in that sense that we are the lawyers of the dead."

[62] All translations fom Kozağaçlı's speech are mine.

Kozağaçlı thus spoke of himself, Timtik, and other colleagues as Antigone figures, whose loyalties lie with the dead who were "enemies of the state" as Heaney put it in *The Burial at Thebes* (1). Yet, Kozağaçlı finds a special Antigone quality in Timtik in her determination to walk toward her death:

> The relationship between Ebru's death and the classical text (*Antigone*) is manifold. First of all, neither of them was killed directly, but they lost their lives at the end of a process in which they could always change their minds and knowing that what lead to their deaths were their own choices. Indeed, they were both accused of defying the law, and in their action, of not being realistic, of not heeding the power balances, of wasting away their lives, and even of hubris. Another resemblance is that even though one is the last princess of Thebes and the other a poor orphan, a Zaza, and an Alawite communist, both are women.

Therefore, what characterizes both Antigone and Timtik is that both are controversial figures who chose to die and defied the law despite being deemed crazy and vain. According to Kozağaçlı, "The Antigone analogy is about resisting an unjust law", so that Antigone and Timtik represent a wilfulness in opposing political power. Just as Antigone defied Creon's law, Kozağaçlı claimed that Timtik defied the court's verdict by declaring it null and void: "The only verdict in this trial is that of Ebru who said we would rather die than let you give a verdict on us".

Kozağaçlı's reading of Antigone via Timtik's act is similar to Luce Irigaray's critique of patriarchy via *Antigone*. In *The Speculum of the Other Woman*, Irigaray claims that the Western patriarchal system is about killing without openly committing a murder, little by little depriving the individual of the environment that allows one to live. In the face of this deprivation, Antigone values life so much that she will not substitute survival in its place. Therefore, Irigaray maintains that "She cannot accept survival instead of living" (204), which is Antigone's rebellious championing of life over Creon's edict. As a result, she chooses to march to her death instead of submitting to the restriction of the human law. In a similar vein, within political theory, Banu Bargu analyses how sovereignty's claims to be the sole regulator of life in the political present are countered by turning life into a weapon against it. In *Starve and Immolate*, Bargu focuses on self-destructive practices such as death fasts that weaponize life (14) and give rise to "necroresistance" (27). Through a discussion of Foucault and Agamben's analysis of biopolitics and sovereignty, Bargu claims that the distinctive characteristic of contemporary power regimes is that "the process of the biopoliticization of sovereignty meets the necropoliticization of resistance" (27), that is, the sovereign control over life is resisted through self-destruction: By the weaponization of life, I refer to the tactic of resorting to corporeal and existential practices of

struggle, based on the technique of self-destruction, in order to make a political statement or advance political goals "(14).

In addition to Mbembe's *Necropolitics*, where he writes about how sovereignty imposes "contemporary forms of subjugating life to the power of death" (92), Bargu thus explores how those who resist contemporary forms of sovereign power mobilize death in the form of necroresistance. As the example of Ebru Timtik demonstrates, this necroresistance aims to reject this combination of "the disciplinary, the biopolitical and the necropolitical" (Mbembe 80). While sovereignty derives its power from its monopoly over how life will be permitted and death regulated, by creating "unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to living conditions that confer upon them the status of the *living dead*" (92), necroresistance becomes one of the ways in which people like Timtik destroy these "death-worlds" (92) they were put into by destroying themselves. Antigone emerges as a powerful metaphor for Kozağaçlı not only because she "resisted an unjust law" by burying her brother, but also because she defied Creon's necropower when she rendered his decision to condemn her to a living death ineffective by taking her own life. In that sense, he evokes Antigone as a powerful metaphor in a canonical work to stand for necroresistance today. It is also crucial to note that the references to Antigone both in Kozağaçlı's defence and Sirman's article invoke the performative aspect in the act of necroresistance. Just as Antigone walks to her own death and makes a political statement with her action, Timtik, Kozağaçlı, and Yıldız seem to employ necroresistance as a performative method to challenge the sovereign's claim over the lives and deaths of citizens today.

4. 2. *Antigone*s on the Turkish and Kurdish Stages

Sophocles' *Antigone* in Turkey started to appear in the 19th century Ottoman Empire with the introduction of the play in Istanbul as part of a fashionable interest in Western forms of theatre[63]. It continues today in the theatres of Istanbul in relation to a political as well as an aesthetic attempt to rethink modern political conflicts and the ensuing trauma, rebellion, and resistance. Thanks to its implicit perceived counter-sovereign politics, it often features within the programmes of both subsidized and independent theatres[64]. Yet, Kemal Demirel's 1966 version,

[63] First known production is Mendelssohn's *Antigone* in Istanbul in 1863 (APGRD).
[64] - Some recent performances of *Antigone* in subsidised theatres:
Sophocles' Antigone: directed by Yaşar Ürük, İzmir State Theatre, 1992-1993; directed by Osman Coşkun Irmak, Trabzon State Theatre, 1998-1999; directed by Ayşe Emel Mesci, Ankara State Theatre, 2005-2006; directed by Kenan Işık, İstanbul State Theatre, 2011-2012; directed by Macit Koper in İstanbul Municipality Theatre, 2005;

Antigone, was the first rewriting of the play in Turkish, to be followed by Şahika Tekand's *Eurydice's Cry* in 2006. A third reworking of the play is Berfin Zenderlioğlu's *Antigone2012* written and staged in Kurdish in 2012. In this section, I focus on 21st century versions by Tekand and Zenderlioğlu that make a case for epistemic resistance, after briefly discussing Demirel's early version.

4. 2. 1. Kemal Demirel's *Antigone*

Kemal Demirel's *Antigone* (1966) is among earlier examples of rewriting classical tragedies with a mind to the political present. It is one of the two non-Western examples that make their way into George Steiner's *Antigones* alongside Fugard's *The Island*. According to Steiner, Demirel's was a "highly politicised *Antigone*" (156). Within a context of rising working class and youth movements leading up to 1968 and reaching its climax in 1970s in Turkey, Demirel's version is an important example of how *Antigone* is taken up to give voice to an alternative interpretation of history, resist sovereignty politically, and speak truth to power regardless of consequences. The play's reference to the ostracised philosopher Ioanna Kuçuradi as a model for *Antigone* also underscores an early collaboration between philosophical and performance traditions in Turkey.

The play was produced in the 1973-74 season of the State Theatre under the direction of Haldun Marlalı. It is exemplary of the leftist sentiment characteristic of its day: the redemption of humanity by heroic acts of enlightened individuals which gained the support of the working class and turned into popular movements. The play lacked a well-knit plot, it was over-idealistic in its portrayal of characters and situations, and overall, it was argumentatively not very convincing. Yet, the play was politically relevant in the context of revolutionary dynamism, military coups, and capital punishments within its recent history. With Demirel's modern addition of a Narrator, Dikmen Gürün finds a Brechtian influence saying it "has the function of

directed by Emre Basalak in Eskişehir Municipality Theatre, 2005; directed by Engin Alkan, İstanbul Municipality Theatre, 2021.
Brecht's Antigone: directed by Barış Erdenk, Adana State Theatre, 2010-2011; Bakırköy Municipality Theatre, 1992 - Independent theatres:
Sophocles' *Antigone* at Afife Jale Sahnesi. Adapted and directed by Mahir Günşıray, 1999; directed by Celal Mordeniz in Kurdish translation by Zana Jarr in Diyarbakır Municipality Theatre, 2012; directed by Öncü Alper, Yakin Tiyarto, 2020; directed by S. Çağrı Pepesöyler, Bay Sahne, 2022.
Anouilh's *Antigone* at Tatavla Sahne. Directed by Eraslan Sağlam, 2016.
Anne Carson's *Antigone*, directed by Cemre Su Salur, Void Productions, 2019.
Ashes [Küller], new version by Burcu Reşit and directed by Özgür Erkekli, Tiyatro Kartela, 2020.

the narrator of the epic theatre, revealing the playwright's worldview" (127). In addition, Demirel is deeply influenced by Anouilh, including not only a Prologue/Narrator but also similar characterizations of Antigone as the pure youth and Creon as a loving uncle. In Demirel's version, the wealth of the Theban royal house comes from cobalt mines, where the miners are underpaid. Polyneices was working alongside his people and wanted to distribute the wealth among the people; however, Eteocles usurped power and imprisoned Polyneices in the palace dungeons. Antigone frees Polyneices for whom there is popular support, but Eteocles attacks with his soldiers, and both brothers die. When Creon prohibits the burial, the funeral turns into a public uprising. Antigone is arrested. Creon appoints three judges to decide on Antigone's fate. All of them represent different levels of moral values, but they all decide on capital punishment. Consequently, Antigone is buried alive in the cobalt mine, and Haemon, off-stage, shoots himself.

Demirel modelled his Antigone on Ioanna Kuçuradi, an academic sacked by her university due her article "The Individual" [Kişi] where she argued against the purgation of left-wing academics after the 1960 military coup. Philosophically, the play is a reflection on Kuçuradi's work on the tragic[65]. For Demirel, Antigone is the representative of higher moral values, but she can only redeem humanity by giving her life for it; hence, death becomes inevitable. This inevitability of the tragic annihilation was informed by Kuçuradi's reading of Scheler's conceptualization of the tragic as an inherent quality of the universe (qtd. in Kaufmann 301) and tragic necessity as inevitability and inescapability (305). Kuçuradi sees the tragic as intrinsic to the human world (Kuçuradi 7-8) and about the conflicting values of human beings (9). Kuçuradi defines the tragic as an inevitable conflict of two equally high ethical values. In the tragic condition, the necessity for carrying out a higher moral value is counterbalanced by the necessity for the destruction of another higher moral value. Consequently, she argues that when the tragic conflict begins, Antigone has to be annihilated (20). She regards Demirel's *Antigone* in a similar light: "As long as humanity exists, Antigone will inevitably be sentenced to death, dear listeners; even the third judge has to condemn her to a death sentence" (74). This dialogue between Kuçuradi and Demirel demonstrates an alliance of a playwright with a philosopher

[65] Kuçuradi's publications around the time of the play are indicative of the philosophical argument behind the play: *The Tragic in Max Scheler and Nietzsche* [*Max Scheler ve Nietzsche'de Trajik* 1965], *Nietzsche and the Human* [*Nietzsche ve İnsan* 1966], *Schopenhauer and the Human* [*Schopenhauer ve İnsan* 1967], as well as her talk "The Problem of Interpreting Reality and Three Antigones: Sophocles', Jean Anouilh's and Kemal Demirel's *Antigone*" ["Gerçeği Yorumlama Sorunu Ve Üç Antigone: Sophokles'in, Jean Anouilh'un, Kemal Demirel'in Antigone'leri"] (Translations mine, 1966).

within Turkish intellectual circles to come up with a peculiar and political understanding of Antigone that prioritizes the ethics and politics of Antigone's resistance.

4. 2. 2. Şahika Tekand's *Eurydice's Cry*

Eurydice's Cry [Evridike'nin Çığlığı] (2006) is the third play of Şahika Tekand's trilogy *Theban Cycle* (also known as *The Oedipus Trilogy*) after *Where is Oedipus?* [Oidipus Nerde?] (2002) and *Oedipus in Exile* [Oidipus Sürgünde] (2004), produced and played by Tekand's ensemble Studio Players. *Eurydice's Cry* premiered on 6th June 2006 in Istanbul as part of the joint festival programme of the 4th International Theatre Olympics and the 15th International Istanbul Theatre Festival. It was also the closing play of the Olympics, which was themed "Beyond Borders", and co-sponsored by the European Cultural Centre of Delphi (ECDD) and Istanbul International Theatre Festival. The production of the play in its local setting, but as part of an international theatre organization is demonstrative of the local-international dialectic at the heart of Tekand's theatre. Being a play highly resonant with the political currents of its time and setting, *Eurydice's Cry* both appeals to Turkish theatre audiences and also continues to resonate with a wider, international engagement with classical tragedies.

Tekand's theatre is a director's theatre, a *Regietheater* (Carlson 580). Tekand belongs to a tradition of "theatre auteurs" who "embrace the whole creative process" and "who create the work they stage – frequently supplanting the playwright – choreograph the movements, design the setting and plot the lighting, and sometimes perform on stage as well" (Innes and Shevtsova 147). In addition to working as a playwright, choreographer, director, and actor, Tekand makes her theatre an experimental space and a school, where she trains actors, dramaturges, and other theatre practitioners in her "Performative Staging and Acting Method". She works with her own ensemble and is in a designer/director partnership (141) with her husband and artist Esat Tekand. Her work can be situated within a tradition that extends from 20th century avant-garde theatre figures such as Vsevolod Meyerhold, Bertolt Brecht, Antonin Artaud, Jerzy Grotowski, and Samuel Beckett, to contemporary post-dramatic theatre[66] directors like Robert Wilson, Theodoros Terzopoulos, and Suzuki Tadashi. In relation to the theatre avant-garde, Tekand's

[66] I employ the term "post-dramatic" as coined by Hans-Thies Lehmann in his book *Postdramatic Theatre* (1999) to refer to the new aesthetics in theatre that have developed since 1970 and that aims to challenge the privileged sites of dramatic text and representation in favour of the material existence of the performance on the stage.

Studio resonates with both Meyerhold's "Theatre-studio" and Grotowski's "Laboratory" (Innes and Shevtsova 64).

Tekand's Studio Players began their performances in the 1990s by staging Beckett[67] whose influence was prominent for Tekand in developing her performative method, as can be seen in *Eurydice's Cry*. In the 2000s, Tekand turned her attention to reworking Greek tragedies upon being commissioned to produce a tragedy from *The Theban Cycle* for the Theatre Olympics in 2002. At the same time, she was developing a tragic theatre in which she adapted and rewrote not only Greek tragedies, but also modern plays such as *Becoming Rhinoceros* (1996 and 2014) based on Ionesco's *Rhinoceros*. The recent productions of the Studio include Beckett's *Waiting for Godot (2016)* and *Play* (2017), Tekand's final tragedy, *Io,* inspired by Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* (2019), and Tekand's own work *Corrosion* [Aşınma] (2021). Through her reworking of *The Theban Cycle,* she advanced and systematized her Performative Method, the trademark of her theatrical style. Attic tragedies have provided Tekand with fertile ground in her search for a solid form and non-naturalistic style. She has been drawn to tragedy for its formal aspects such as stylized dramatic style, episodic structure, employment of the Chorus, as well as the relevance she found in its philosophical concerns such as responsibility, justice, and conscience. Tekand has established a unique approach within Turkish theatre, bringing together Attic tragedy and modernist theatre to create a post-dramatic and political theatre that prioritizes the here and now of performance.

Amongst the scholarly work on Tekand's theatre[68], Serap Erincin's illuminating chapter "Performing Rebellion: *Eurydice's Cry* in Turkey" in *Antigone on the Contemporary World Stage*[69] previously focused on the production of *Eurydice's Cry* within the Turkish context in terms of the play's dramaturgy and politics. Writing in 2009, Erincin gives a detailed account of the performance of the play, with special emphasis on its "highly stylized, structured, and choreographed movement" and sound scores (172, 174). In terms of the play's politics, which

[67] *Happy Days* (1993), *Five Short Plays*: *Act Without Words I & II, Come and Go, Breath, and Play.* (1994), and *Endgame* (1998).

[68] For a discussion of Tekand's theatrical practice and reworking of Attic tragedies, see; Dikmen Gürün, "Sophocles Interpretations in Turkish Theatre" in *Staging of Classical Drama around 2000,* edited by Pavlína N. Šípová and Alena Sarkissian. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007. pp. 122-131; Verda Habif, *Antik Yunanda Oyunculuk ve Çağdaş Uygulamalar* [Acting in Ancient Greece and Contemporary Practices]. Unpublished Master's Thesis. İstanbul: İstanbul University, 2008; Burç İdem Dinçel's *Translating the Tragic: Mimetic Transformation of Attic Tragedies on the Contemporary Stage*. Unpublished PhD Thesis. Dublin: Trinity College Dublin, 2019; and an interview with Tekand in Kerem Karaboğa, *Tragedya ile Sınırları Aşmak: Theodoros Terzopoulos'un Tiyatrosu* [Transcending the Borders through Tragedy: The Theatre of Theodoros Terzopoulos]. İstanbul: E Yayınları, 2008.

[69] Serap Erincin. "Performing Rebellion: Eurydice's Cry in Turkey" in *Antigone on the Contemporary World Stage*, edited by Erin B. Mee and Helene P. Foley. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2011. pp. 171-183.

she finds as expressed mainly through choreography, Erincin focuses on civil liberties, such as freedom of expression, the rights of the Kurdish population, or the women excluded from universities due to a headscarf ban at that time, as well as issues around democracy, human rights, civil war and military dictatorships that have prevailed in the country. Even though she ends her essay with a cautionary note about the "intolerance" and "oppressive behaviour" of Erdoğan resembling that of Creon (183), her emphasis is on the damaging effects of the 1980 military coup that institutionalized militarism in the country. The vocabulary employed by both Erincin and the play's production notes on its website, which define the central concepts of the play as "the rights of the other", "freedom of speech, faith, and thought", "the just practice of law", and "war"[70] is typical of the European Union induced political vocabulary of the 2000s in Turkey. With the European Union's Accession Negotiations starting in 2005, Turkey promised to work on these issues to increase the level of democracy within the country. So, even though criticism around problems related to human rights and justice had always been sensitive topics that trigger government anger, the EU candidacy process gave dissenters some legal vocabulary to address them. Within the Turkish context, concepts like "unjust war" or "fratricidal war", as well as "dirty war" immediately bring to mind the civil war atmosphere in the Kurdish regions of Turkey and has direct links to the sovereign necropolitics that have prevailed.

The time of the play's production was still a period of transition prior to major constitutional changes to Turkey's government in 2010s that enabled Erdoğan to rule solo in the country. Nevertheless, looking back at *Eurydice's Cry* fourteen years after Erincin's essay, the play demonstrates an ominous foresight of the dictatorial direction of Erdoğan's regime, which resonates far beyond what it declared at its time of production. The play also signals Tekand's ongoing engagement with unveiling the epistemic violence that mutes alternative narratives and facilitates dictatorship. By giving voice to figures like Eurydice and Io, whose perspectives have not been heard either in myth or in tragedies until now, Tekand explores what it means to actually hear the discourse of the oppressed so as to challenge the dominant narrative of the sovereign. In this chapter, different from former readings of the play, and also informed by her later work, *Io* (2019), I offer a retrospective analysis of Tekand's reworking of *Antigone* through a discussion of sovereignty and necroresistance in relation to epistemic resistance, expressed in a performative politics within the action and narrative of the play.

[70] The English version of the webpage has "ethnic clashes" and "civil wars" instead of "wars" here.

Eurydice's Cry follows the episodic structure of Sophocles' *Antigone* with some variation. The play starts with Prologos, followed by four episodes between which are three stasima, and ends with an Exodos. The Prologos opens with the Chorus' announcement of Polyneices' burial and an expression of outrage that the law has been violated. In Episode 1, Creon addresses the public, in which he interrogates and threatens the Chorus to reveal who buried Polyneices against his edict. Episode 2 is the *agon* of Tiresias and Creon, which takes place much earlier than it does in Sophocles and is rather reminiscent of Tiresias' scene in *Oedipus Tyrannus*. In Episode 3, the clash between Antigone and Creon takes place, where Ismene also questions the legitimacy of her sister's deed. Antigone accuses Creon of being thirsty for power and usurping the throne. At the end of this episode, Ismene cannot put up with Creon's injustice, joins Antigone, and they start speaking and moving in unison. Episode 4 is the combination of Sophocles' third and fourth episodes, where, respectively, Haemon confronts his father and Antigone walks to her death. Haemon is not only enraged by his father's stubbornness, but also accuses him of being responsible of bloodshed in the country. Consequently, he joins forces with Antigone and Ismene, and from then on, the three characters start speaking and moving together as if they form an alternative chorus. They chant Antigone's *kommos* together, which represents the death of these three characters. They embrace their death performatively through the adoption of the phrase, "Come death!" [Gel ölüm!] and the pose associated with it. The episode ends when Eurydice steps in and cries out Haemon's name. In the three stasima in between the episodes, the chorus' lines evolve as the mood of the play changes. In the first stasimon, the Chorus cries out in horror that they will kill the violator and asks for help from the gods. Then, in the second, the Chorus adds that they will kill because the law has been violated but expresses an ambivalent attitude of wavering. By the third stasimon the Chorus' indignation rises as it questions which law Antigone has violated so that she will be killed. Finally, the Exodos opens with the Chorus giving voice to their rebellion and asking how one can keep silent at the face of such injustice. Lastly, Eurydice begins her soliloquy, "her cry", cursing herself for keeping silent and announcing that she will destroy her body that has enabled Creon his tyranny so far. She repeats the keyword "Come death!" and the associated pose as she joins Antigone, Ismene, and Haimon in death. The play ends with all characters having died and Creon crushed by pain.

Like the other *Antigone* versions discussed in this thesis, *Eurydice's Cry* is less interested in burial than the political struggle it brings about. The burial precedes the action as the play opens

with the Chorus' announcement that "Polyneices has been buried!" [Polineikes gömüldü!][71]. According to Tekand, her play's central conflict is different from Sophocles' and it is rather the question for the average citizen to ponder: "While all these things were happening, what were you doing?" (Tekand, Bodur). In that sense, she claims that she is no longer so invested in the conflict between Antigone and Creon. Instead, she questions the one(s) who kept silent and with this silence enabled the dictatorship to take its course, and she finds this as reflected primarily in the figure of Eurydice as well as the Chorus. Thus, Tekand turns to Eurydice just as Tóibín turned toward Ismene as the one that has always kept her silence. By giving her a voice to cry out her rebellion, Tekand, too, makes a point in terms of emphasizing that the sovereign's power rests on the silent consent of the majority. In this respect, what gets invented in Tekand's play is a displacement of the central conflict in Sophocles' play in favour of finding an epistemic space to resist sovereignty. Within this framework, according to Tekand, the true protagonist of her play is the Chorus (Tekand, Bodur), symbolizing the modern public, the ordinary citizen or the majority in modern states, and their decision-making processes.

In Tekand's play, this epistemic resistance is reflected through the dialectic between two aspects of the play: performance and narrative. Tekand claims that the here and now of performance is the backbone of the theatrical experience, and narrative has only secondary importance for her (Tekand, Bodur). However, my reading of *Eurydice's Cry* suggests that the two are closely interconnected through their performativity, and it is the interplay of action and speech that facilitates the epistemic resistance. On the one hand, reflected through different poses organized within a stylized choreography, the action in the play is performative in the sense that they make a statement through their repeated enactment. Each pose expresses a different meaning like fear, pain, suspicion, indignation, rebellion, and death, and their repetition makes them legible. On the other hand, the characters constantly give voice to illocutionary speech acts that, too, get repeated throughout the play and "in saying do what they say" (Butler, *Excitable Speech* 3). Keywords such as "Come death!" [Gel ölüm!] signifies the death of the character that utters it, or "Enough!" [Yeter!] signifies that the character is now in rebellion. Yet, it is with the combination of performative action and speech acts that meaning gets to be played

[71] All quotations from Tekand's play, unless specified otherwise, are mine as there are some discrepancies between the unpublished play text in Turkish and its published translation in English that has a significant impact on the meanings I am working through in my argument. I explicitly give reference when I quote from its published translation in *Solum and Other Plays from Turkey*, ed. Serap Erincin, trans. Serap Erincin and Mark Ventura. London: Seagull, 2011. The original quotations in Turkish appear in brackets except when the word quoted makes a specific point, in which case it is given in italics, and translation into English follow.

out in the performance. Just as Butler states in relation to gender that "an identity [is] instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts*" ("Performative Acts and Gender Constitution" 519), Tekand's characters also emerge from the stylized repetition of gestures and speech acts.

This dialectic is facilitated by what Tekand terms a game structure that upholds the action (Tekand, Bodur). Developed by Tekand over the years, the game employed in *Eurydice's Cry* in particular, and *The Theban Cycle* in the overall, owes much to Samuel Beckett's *Play*, which is summarized by Nicholas Johnson from the perspective of the actor: "arrive, get in position, when the light is on speak, when the light is off no longer speak, then repeat". Johnson underscores that this is an example of "Beckett's deployment of stage situations and 'theatre machines' that generate emotional landscapes in the actor not because of underlying 'character emotions' to be mapped or understood, but rather because they represent a specific task to be performed" (58-59). Similarly, in *Eurydice's Cry*, actors can only move or speak when the light falls on them. This rule both constricts and aestheticizes movement and sound in the play. Unlike Beckett, Tekand does not place the actors in objects like the urns in *Play*; however, she limits their movements both with the use of lighting and through choreography. The action in the play is set on a matrix created by carrying out a sequence of a limited number of movements in a compelling order and rhythm. The action accelerates from slow to very fast, which makes it a demanding performance. To do this, she uses an acceleration in the rhythm of language and in the frequency of the changes in lighting. As the actors are physically challenged to perform these difficult tasks, Tekand believes that this will replace the artificial make-believe in mimetic modes of representation with the reality of performing the task in the present time. According to Tekand, "Restricted movements should represent the behavioural patterns of the contemporary human beings who are persuaded to believe that they are independent individuals, but who live in their prejudices and fears within the confines of the system"[72] (Director's Notes). So, the question is how political change may be possible in spite of the restrictions imposed. Tekand aims to show that revolution is indeed possible as the light shifts from one actor to the other and shifts in the movement matrix bring about rebellion that becomes contagious.

Tekand aims to look for what is at stake for sovereign power in the mechanism of the modern society, and by laying bare the mechanism in performance, she questions the possibility and extent of revolt from within the structure itself. To do so, Tekand employs stylized choreography operated by lighting that directs and restricts the movement of the actors in the

[72] All translation from Director's Notes are mine.

play, and language whose primary function is not to convey meaning but to create music and rhythm. Erincin describes this choreography in detail and defines Tekand's method as the "use of choreography as politics" (172). She emphasizes that in the play, the characters were given certain poses and movements, and once the spectators could associate each pose and movement with a character, they could follow the choreographic narrative of the play (172). According to Erincin, the dominant poses are Creon's at the beginning. Not only the Chorus, but also characters like Ismene and Eurydice take on these poses. However, in the second half of the play, Antigone's poses become contagious as her rebellion spreads from herself to Haemon, Ismene, the Chorus, and finally Eurydice, culminating in a revolutionary movement against established order (181).

Here, I would like to suggest an alternative to Erincin's interpretation of choreography. Instead of associating the poses with the characters, namely Creon and Antigone, I propose to interpret them as poses related to obedience and rebellion, which also conforms to Tekand's emphasis on the affective power of performance over the embodiment of character, the dominant mode employed by naturalistic forms of theatre. Another problem is that Creon has his own poses that are different from those of the Chorus. Creon, dressed in a military uniform, starts in an erect position suggesting military power with his hands on his waist and then his index finger pointing forward or upward in a threatening manner. In the second episode, he starts losing both his temper and his control. In his confrontation with Tiresias, he is no longer upright but bends down, stomps his feet and almost comes down on his knees. In the fourth episode, the *agon* with Haemon finally brings him to his knees and by the time Eurydice gives way to her outcry, he collapses entirely.

The Chorus, which is composed of eight actors, four at each side of the stage, has a more ambivalent attitude than starting with poses associated with Creon might suggest. Above all, the Chorus neither starts with Creon-induced poses nor in unison. In the Prologos, Chorus members are engaged in a wide array of poses. The feeling is that of horror and discord. With the entry of Creon in Episode 1, they assume a rigid uniform pose immediately, more suggestive of Creon's military power and oppression than compliance. This is supported by silences, pauses, and more markedly the silent scream the Chorus puts on during Creon's proclamation. The Chorus' silence is not that of unconditional consent, but rather that of fear and apprehension. Consequently, the Chorus fears Creon and is obedient at the beginning. But a second discord in movement occurs after Tiresias speaks in Episode 2, and during the second stasimon, the

Chorus utters the lines "I am wavering" [Bocalamaktayım]. They are still assuming poses associated with obedience, but for a short time they do not perform the same poses at the same time, symbolic of the discord caused by the Chorus' wavering, stressing their ambivalence. Yet a third discord comes about after Antigone speaks up in Episode 3. Again, the movements are obedient but discordant. Right after Antigone cries out "Enough!", the first Chorus member on stage right that stands closest to the centre and Creon assumes poses associated with rebellion, followed by the second member next to him, then Ismene, and finally the third and fourth Chorus members. By the time Antigone and Ismene form a counter-chorus, half of the Chorus members assume the poses associated with rebellion. Only after Haemon's encounter with Creon, the Chorus members on the stage left engage with the rebellious poses. Finally, when Eurydice steps in, all Chorus members have already embodied the poses related to rebellion and they no longer move in unison.

Eurydice has a movement of her own throughout the play, as well. Although she seems to appear out of nowhere and looks stationary most of the time, it is her subtle movements and gestures that frame the action and cast their shadow on the play. Eurydice is dressed in a flaming red dress, suggestive of how she will set all on fire. She appears sitting at Creon's feet at the beginning of Episode 3, observing the action in the play. When Antigone is finished, she turns her back to the audience, symbolically turning her back on Creon, too. In Episode 4, her outcry "Haemon!" in total darkness closes the scene, after which she steps in centre stage for her soliloquy, and it is now her rebellious poses that are mirrored by the Chorus. Read alongside the Chorus' changing attitude and Eurydice's poses, the movement design in the play is the first factor that demonstrates collective rebellion starting from Antigone, spreading to the other characters and the Chorus.

Contrary to Erincin, according to whom the Chorus moves from siding with Creon to siding with Antigone during the course of the play, at the opening of the play, I find an ambivalent and ironic attitude in the Chorus expressed through both language and movement design. The Chorus never shows an open agreement with Creon. Within the poetic language they employ, music and rhythm are prioritized over meaning. Their lines are repetitive and involve many exclamations that correspond to emotions such as fear, suspicion or terror. These repetitions rather resemble a chant at times and undergo shifts of meaning as the play progresses, which adds to the irony in the play. The Prologos opens with the single word "Buried!" [Gömüldü!] followed by the exclamation "Ha!" and "Polyneices is buried!" [Polineikes

gömüldü!]. After this declaration, what comes is single syllable exclamations that do not have an apparent meaning "*Ya*!", "*Ka*!", and "*Gö*!" until they are followed by words formed by them. Then, "Ya!" becomes "*Yasak*!" [Ban, banned, or prohibition, prohibited] and "*Nasıl delindi yasak*!" [How was the ban violated!]. Likewise, "*Ka!*" first becomes "*Kapkara*" [Pitch-black!], and then "*Kapkara toprak*" [Pitch-black earth!] and "*Kapkara toprak örtüldü*" [Covered with pitch-black earth!]. This build-up of sentences creates an affective language that reflects the mood of the scene: speaking the unspeakable. The most prominent example of this affective language is the use of the one syllable exclamation "*Ha!*" in multiple ways. At the beginning, it denotes an inhaled deep breath to signify the horror felt by the Chorus. At other times, Tekand stresses that it takes up on different meanings such as an exclamation of astonishment, sound of fear or a scream of horror (qtd. in Erincin 174). This affective use of monosyllables, as well as the syntax employed in the building up of ideas starting from the syllable and moving on to first words and then whole sentences come close to Derrida's understanding of iterative language and Butler's employment of it.

Iteration in a Derridean sense and as employed by Butler to refer to a resistant political strategy is central to Tekand's theatre and in particular, *Eurydice's Cry*, and it can be traced in multiple layers within the structure and language of the play. It starts from the citationality of discourse and movement within the play. Tekand explains how citation is employed strategically in her Director's Notes to the play:

> The play texts are filled with citations from Sophoclean tragedies and other texts in addition to cross-citations from one another. For example, some of Oedipus' lines in the first tragedy are employed by Creon and some from the second tragedy are employed by Antigone. As such, characters respond in a way that objective conditions compel them, not simply as a result of their personal traits.

In *Eurydice's Cry*, not only the characters of Antigone and Creon, but also the Chorus repeat the lines from the former plays of the trilogy. But they also repeat them within the same play, often for subversive effects. Just as the sovereign's discourse derives its power and authority from its citationality and iterability as in Creon's lines, the deferred meanings of the characters' or the Chorus' speech acts also become instances where meaning is reinvented. Tekand's stress on the impersonality of these repetitions is resonant with the decentring of the subject in Derrida, Butler, and Spivak's writings. Butler's emphasis that Antigone does not perform at will, but that language performs through her, interpellating her holds true for Tekand's characters and her Chorus. It is not that the subjects precede the language they use, but "reiteration exceeds the will

of the performer (Butler, *Bodies that Matter* 178). As the characters and the Chorus are pushed by the action to make a decision and determine their stance politically, they are also interpellated by the language that works through them.

A striking example that demonstrates the iterative language and the political shift in the Chorus' attitude is given in the third stasimon. While repeating the previous two stasima starting with "They will kill" [Öldürecekler], the Chorus adds a phrase:

> They will stone
> They will stone her to death
> They will drag her and stone her to death
> She violated the law so that they will drag her and stone her to death
>
> She has violated which law of the gods that they will drag her
> and stone her to death?
>
> [Taşlayarak
> Taşlayarak öldürecekler
> Onu sürükleyip taşlayarak öldürecekler
> Kanunu çiğnedi ki onu sürükleyip taşlayarak öldürecekler
> Tanrıların hangi kanununu çiğnedi ki onu sürükleyip
> taşlayarak öldürecekler]

This iterative reversal of attitude in the third stasimon by adding one more phrase to the previous stanza to twist the meaning and eventually change the emphasis underscores an ambivalent attitude concerning the Chorus. On the one hand, the change in the Chorus' attitude can be interpreted as the development of its resistant politics. On the other, it is also open to a reading that suggests an irony in the tone of the Chorus, which they kept hidden at the beginning of the play, and only with the rebellion are they in a position to openly declare it. The use of iterative language enforces the ironic reading suggestive of the Chorus' ambivalence.

The twists in the repeated chant-like lines of the chorus emphasise the ambiguity of their words. One of the most repeated lines throughout the play is "I am wavering", which illustrates the ambivalence of the Chorus perfectly. The wavering starts as induced by fear in Episode 2, following Tiresias' words and after many repetitions it takes on this expression: "I am now wavering in the winds of fear" [Bocalamaktayım artık korkunun rüzgarında]. This goes on until Episode 4, where fear turns into rebellion and the Chorus bursts out "It makes me revolt!" [İsyan ettiriyor]. With this, the wavering is now induced by anger: "I am now wavering in the flames of anger" [Bocalamaktayım artık alevinde öfkenin]. Even though the affect changes, the

Chorus still wavers, which can also alter the signification of the initial wavering, retrospectively replacing the tone from fear to threat. Another illustrative example starts in Episode 1 as follows:

CHORUS – The traitor, the child of arrogance and grandiosity,
As it feeds and grows,
Sees himself so high up

[KORO – Kibrin azametin çocuğu hain
Beslenip büyüdükçe
Görür kendini yükseklerde]

These lines get repeated partially throughout the play. By the time of Tiresias' opposition to Creon, the word "traitor" drops out, and in Episode 4, "the traitor" changes into "the tyrant", totally shifting the subject of the sentence from Creon's accused target to the sovereign himself. What appeared to sound in support of Creon at the beginning of the play turns against him and now targets him toward the end as it transforms into "the tyrant, the child of arrogance and grandiosity". Again, retrospectively speaking, the Chorus' initial attitude seems less one of support than of caution. As such, this ambivalence underlines a dynamic between the movement design and text in the play. Whereas in movement the Chorus seems to embody the poses associated with obedience to Creon's rule, the ambiguity in their lines dislocates and deconstructs a straightforward meaning in their attitude.

In each episode, certain keywords repeated by the Chorus sets the mood of the scene and facilitates a portrayal of the affective passage from shock and helplessness, to ambiguity, ambivalence, vacillation, desperation and finally to revolt. In the Prologos and Episode 1, the keywords of the Chorus move from exclamations to questions. The same question words employed as exclamations in the Prologos, such as "Who!" [Kim] and "How!" [Nasıl], in the sense of "How dare!", turn into real questions of "Who?" and "How?" when the Chorus begins to wonder who may have buried Polyneices. They start to feel threatened and ask, "What is to be done?" [Ne yapmalı?], "How to get acquitted?" [Nasıl temize çıkmalı?]. Additionally, the Chorus also asks for help from the Gods crying out "Alas!" [Eyvah!], "Help!" [Yetişin!], "Gods!" [Tanrılar!]. In Episode 2, Tiresias' prophecies constitute a turning point for the Chorus and the keywords change from "Don't" [Yapma!] and "Stop!" [Dur!] to "I'm wavering" [Bocalamaktayım]. By Episode 4, it becomes "It is revolting!" [İsyan ettiriyor] and in the Exodos, the Chorus exclaims that "It is revolting what I see and hear / It exhausts my patience all I am listening" [İsyan ettiriyor görüp işittiklerim / Sabrımı taşırıyor dinlediklerim]. Finally, the Chorus questions "How does mankind put up and keep silent?" [İnsanoğlu nasıl katlanır susar] inviting

Eurydice to come up and break her silence. With this final comment, the Chorus joins the revolt and Creon is left all alone without the public support that enables his power. It is thus implied that his regime falls.

With his modern military uniform and threatening tone, Tekand's Creon is linked to modern day military dictators and their practices, who take advantage of a state of exception created by civil wars, and extra-legally exercise a power over life and death. In that sense, he is the representative of a contemporary form of sovereignty as outlined by Agamben, Mbembe, and Butler. As he demands unquestioning submission to this authoritative rule, he is shocked that somebody dared to disobey his orders and forces the Chorus to comply: "Speak! It is time to show your loyalty to the state! Decide!" [Konuşun! Devlete sadakatinizi göstermenin günü geldi! Kararınızı verin!]. In his threats, he goes as far as addressing "thought crime", a regular symptom of lack of democracy in modern states: "These words alone are an insult to the laws of the state. Even thinking them is a crime" [Bu sözler bile devletin yasalarına alenen hakarettir. Bunları düşünmek bile suçtur]. Or when he goes on to set the rules on how to grieve properly, he shouts: "It is improper to mourn by screaming and shouting. This is no way to respect the dead; it is defiance" [Böyle çığlık çığlığa yas tutulmaz. Ölüye saygı değil, başıbozukluk denir buna]. In Creon's world, similar to modern dictatorships, thoughts and emotions are under the control of the sovereign. In terms of embodying the various epistemic injustices, he displays the epistemic vices characteristic of his power position such as his epistemic ignorance in the form of arrogance, i.e., thinking of oneself as cognitively superior and not learning from others' experiences and standpoints (Medina 30-31), closed-mindedness i.e., needing not to know other's epistemic perspectives (34), and "meta-blindness", that is, his inability to understand the limits of his own horizon of understanding (75).

When Creon has modern resonances with a dictator, those that oppose his power also take up a more modern revolutionary quality. While Creon has a totally different narrative around his own sacrifices and patriotism, Antigone accuses him of more than prohibiting burial. According to Antigone, it is common knowledge that Creon was hungry for power. While he forcefully detained Oedipus when he wanted to leave out of shame, he later exiled him after he had decided to stay. In order to usurp the throne, he created bad blood between the brothers Eteocles and Polyneices and led the city into a civil war. Finally, Antigone reproaches Creon for depriving the city of its right to grieve, by leaving the corpses out in the open. Antigone's views related to unjust power are backed by Haemon who additionally accuses Creon of sending

Megareus, his elder brother, to die in battle, by preaching war heroism for years: "You even took advantage of Megareus' death. . . How dare you grieve for him? How dare you cry? I am ashamed of being your son now" [Sen Megareus'un ölümünden bile yararlandın… Onun yasını tutma hakkını kendine nasıl tanırsın? Ona gözyaşı döküp nasıl ağlarsın? Artık senin oğlun olmaktan utanıyorum]. Haemon also emphasizes his motives for opposing his father: "If I opposed you just because I love this woman, I would lose a father. But I oppose you because submitting to tyranny strips me of human dignity" [Eğer sadece bu kadını sevdiğim için sana karşı çıkmış olsaydım bir babadan olurdum. Sana karşı çıkıyorum, çünkü mezalime boyun eğmek beni insanlık onurumdan eder]. Consequently, both Antigone's and Haemon's rebellion have an openly political quality. Additionally, Ismene is far from being submissive and begs to join Antigone. Through this gesture, Ismene comes close to Honig's understanding of sororal solidarity in sharing Antigone's crime and verdict.

If Antigone, Ismene, and Haemon are not only rebellious, but also representative of a political revolution against tyranny, their theoretician is clearly Tiresias, who alludes to Marx' famous words in *The Communist Manifesto* in his confrontation with Creon: "All melts into air, all that is holy is profaned" [Her şey buharlaşıyor. Kutsal olan her şey ayaklar altına alınıyor]. This portrayal of Tiresias the blind seer in parallel with Marx, who can be thought of as a modern-day prophet for revolution, underlines the contemporary political significance of the play in addressing and opposing sovereign political power. Antigone's rebellion is not just about her right to bury her brother; but to change their fate. She cries out:

> Enough!
> Why would I keep quiet when we could just as well change our accursed fate, Or, even if we can't change it, at least fight for it, and make our lives more meaningful through sacrificing for it?
> Enough!
> Do you expect me to accept that we should pay the price of a sin our wretched parents committed in ignorance for all our lives and for generations?"
>
> [Yeter!
> lanetli kaderimizi değiştirmek, değiştiremesek bile bunun
> için mücadele etmek; hayatlarımızı buna feda ederek değerli kılmak
> dururken neden susayım;
> Yeter!
> zavallı annemizin ve babamızın bilmeden
> işledikleri bir günahın bedelini hayatımız ve nesiller boyu ödemeyi
> kabul etmemi mi bekliyorsun?]

Hence, in Tekand's version, Antigone's rebellion takes on a political mission to change her destiny, which becomes the fate of the city. It becomes a form of necroresistance, which is to sacrifice one's life for a greater cause. It gains the quality of collective resistance as Antigone subsumes the other characters as well as influencing the Chorus. Thus, Tekand's Antigone is far from the solitary figure Antigone is represented to be not only in Sophocles but also in modern versions of the play such as in Anouilh or Brecht. Here, Antigone emerges an "epistemic hero", an emblem for resistance, an "extraordinary [subject] who under conditions of epistemic oppression [is] able to develop epistemic virtues with a tremendous transformative potential" as Medina showed through the example of Rosa Park's resistance (186). Antigone's dissent has an echoable quality as both her rebellion and her dying act get repeated by Ismene, Haemon, and Eurydice.

As Antigone subsumes the other characters in collective rebellion, there is a counter-chorus formed by Antigone, Ismene, and Haemon. It is not a counter-chorus in the sense of being an oppositional force against the Chorus, yet it is a counter-chorus for fulfilling a role that is not taken up by the Chorus: antagonism and opposition. Contrary to the solitude of Antigone as represented in Sophocles, the audience witnesses a shift of power dynamics as Antigone organizes and breaks her solitude. She both becomes part of a counter-chorus and gains the support of the Chorus toward the end. In forming this counter-chorus, the necessary act, i.e., the rebellion is instigated by Antigone, who not only defends her deed, but opposes Creon's sovereign power, and as such, it quickly spreads to Ismene. The two women start talking and moving together, to be presently joined by Haemon. The keyword that initiates Antigone's rebellion and her defiance of Creon comes halfway through Episode 3 when she cries out "Enough!" [Yeter!]. Even though she has already buried her brother before and confessed it, this is the moment when she says "Enough!" to the pleas of the Chorus and Ismene, who keep on saying "Don't!" [Yapma!] and makes it clear that she has cut the cord by which any negotiation can be reached with Creon. After her *agon*, she is joined by Ismene with the same phrase, and from then on Antigone and Ismene form the counter-chorus. Haemon begins his confrontation with his father with keywords such as "Listen!" [Dinle!] (44) and "Think! [Düşün!], but as the conflict between them escalates, he, too, utters the rebellious "Enough!", after which he is involved in the counter-chorus that becomes the central force of rebellion. Antigone, Ismene, and Haimon start chanting together evoking the famous *kommos* of Sophocles' Antigone:

Antigone, Ismene, and Haemon: O tomb! O bridal chamber cut in the hollow rock.
I am coming there before my time. . . .
O Hades! I am being sent to you by a tyrant. . . .
Come, death!

[Antigone, İsmene, Haimon: Ey mezar! Kayalar içindeki gelin odası.
Zamanım dolmadan oraya geliyorum. . . .
Ey Hades! Bir zalim eliyle sana
gönderiliyorum! . . .
Gel ölüm!]

The words "Come, death!" become the keywords for the instigation of a revolution. In the Exodos, the words are repeated by Eurydice, who by breaking her silence, finalizes the revolution initiated by Antigone, Ismene, and Haemon. The dialectic at work between Creon and Antigone and her allies is sublated by the entrance of the figure of Eurydice into the play.

Even though, the counter-chorus of Antigone, Ismene, and Haimon alongside the ideological leadership of Tiresias seem to be the heart and soul of an organized revolution, for Tekand, Eurydice is the real revolutionary figure who brings about the moment of change as she is in no way implicated in the discourse of the sovereign. Unlike Antigone and others who are implicated in a power struggle with Creon, Eurydice expects nothing from him, and she does not even engage in a discussion with him. In the end, she denounces and rejects Creon and his rule completely, and without her consent, the system can no longer be upheld. Eurydice appears first as a shadowy figure that sits silently behind Creon starting from the third episode (Erincin 178). She looks dismayed but continues to be in the grip of Creon. Only after Haemon walks toward death, she rises to her feet and cries out her son's name, thereby ending the last Episode. The Exodus is mainly composed of her rebellious speech acts. She is the silent and compliant one who has true transformative potential the moment she has nothing to lose. Like the modern working class, she also has productive and reproductive power. She is ultimately characterized by motherhood and speaks from within that position, but she has now developed a controversial attitude toward maternity, as well. As the mother, the life giver, and the owner of the womb that houses new life, she does not essentialize motherhood or opt for a politics of maternity. Instead, she uses this role to annihilate it along with the patriarchal system that controlled it. Her "cry", her outburst and soliloquy at the end of the tragedy, both deconstructs and puts on hold any claim to sovereignty:

Off my skin, I scrape what was given to me as love.
I take back the life I have borne, the world I gave.
In my loins, I squeeze and suffocate the world I gave life to…

I bury it in my womb.
Damn the happiness created by submission!...
Finally, I get rid of this body that has been complicit in tyranny.
I destroy this battlefield that was once my home.
I set this palace on fire. I set all palaces on fire…

Damn every day that passed in silence!
Damn every breath inhaled without fury!
Come, Death! (Tekand, *Eurydice's Cry* 127-128)

[Bana sevgi diye verileni etimden sıyırıp atıyorum.
Doğurduğum hayatı, verdiğim dünyayı geri alıyorum
Hayat verdiğim dünyayı kasıklarımın arasına sıkıştırıp boğuyorum.

Onu rahmime gömüyorum.
Teslimiyetin yarattığı mutluluğa lanet olsun

Zulme ortaklık eden bu bedenden artık kurtuluyorum.
Bir zamanlar evim olan bu savaş alanını yok ediyorum
Bu sarayı ateşe veriyorum. Bütün sarayları ateşe veriyorum.

Susarak geçen her güne lanet olsun!
Öfkesiz alınan her nefese lanet olsun!
Gel ölüm!]

Even more striking than her dying act is Eurydice's framing of her own death, which inclines toward Spivak's reading of Bhuvaneswari's self-destruction. As Eurydice assumes a voice in Tekand, she not only embodies resistance of the social text of good wifehood in her subversive act, but she also transcends her subalternity by ending her silence and assuming a voice. In this sense, Eurydice becomes Tekand's true revolutionary force. She starts the revolution by destroying her body which, according to her, is an accomplice to tyranny. It is as a body that she has been subjected to Creon's authoritarianism and it is her body that gave him two sons, further enabling his potency. This life-giving quality of the womb is thus juxtaposed with Eurydice's claim to take back the life in a physical gesture, by squeezing it in her loins to kill it. Just as she once gave birth to his sons, she now presents him with death by destroying the very same body. By describing it as a "battlefield", she also underlines that both the female body and the country, which is often read through the metaphor of a female body, are now to be destroyed to end the bloodshed. Thus, for Tekand, Eurydice stands out as the feminist heroine which Antigone, implicated in a power struggle with Creon and appropriating his sovereign speech acts, failed to become, in Butler's view (*Antigone's Claim* 27). So, the question put forward by Audre Lorde still remains: will the master's tools ever dismantle the master's house? In other words, can you employ the sovereign's discourse to fight against it? According to Butler, this is

the reason why Antigone can never be a feminist or queer heroine (2, 72); however, what she finds in Antigone's position is a liminality which enables her to go beyond established meanings of representation (2, 82). For Butler, Antigone points toward a beyond of the politics of representation, and it is from there that her revolutionary potential emerges. However, for Tekand Eurydice steps in at this threshold of liminality.

Finally, as Eurydice embraces the keywords, "Come death!", she becomes the final destroyer of Creon's order. Erincin terms this "death as revolution" (181) and comments that "The fact that none of the chorus members who remained felt obliged to perform poses associated with [Creon] indicated that Antigone had started a revolution before her death. Eurydice, who had previously remained silent and died silently in Sophocles's *Antigone*, talked, screamed, and cursed as the last note of the performance" (181). This raises the question as to if and how death can represent revolution, and how the politicisation of death in the form of necroresistance can become a counter-sovereign strategy in the play. According to Bargu, under conditions of biopolitical / necropolitical sovereignty, as "[t]he insurgent's body becomes the concrete battleground of domination and resistance, subjugation and subversion, sovereignty and sacrifice", necroresistance becomes the political action to reclaim "the power of life and death into the hands of those who resist" (*Starve and Immolate* 272). Therefore, necroresistance becomes the collective strategy to divest Creon of his sovereign power over life and death. Analysing the death fast as a particular form of necroresistance, Bargu maintains that it is "an act of refusal" that expresses "the desire not to be oppressed and to exit the existing order whose increasingly fixed relations of oppression and injustice were being reinstated along with the refurbishment of the sovereign power of the state" (274). Even though these acts of self-destruction resemble suicide, Bargu emphasizes that they should not be conflated in a way to erase the claim to political intervention (18). Instead, she proposes to read these acts as instances of the "weaponization of life" and the agents of these acts as "human weapons" (14) that fight against "the biopoliticization of sovereignty" (27).

Eurydice, Antigone, Ismene, and Haemon do not commit suicide and simply end their lives, but they engage in a performative action of necroresistance that aims to make a statement through their dying acts. Their deaths leave Creon alone and represent the collapse of the system that upholds the regime. As sovereignty takes its power from the consent of those who are subjected to it, they performatively withdraw their consent. They expose both the tyranny of the power regime and the fact that sovereignty's claim to biopolitics and necropolitics can

actually be countered. The performative nature of their dying acts which has first and foremost the effect of making a political statement also marks it as a form of epistemic resistance. Just as Medina stated that for an act of epistemic resistance to lead to social change, it must be echoable, i.e., become part of a performative chain of resistance with transformative potential, the echoability of Antigone's performative necroresistance finds expression both in the other characters that she subsumes and the Chorus. Thus, it becomes a transforming act only through the Chorus' political mobilization. If these deaths represent the annihilating power of revolution, the adoption of Antigone's rebellious poses and gestures by the Chorus represents the implementation of a new order and complements the revolution.

4. 2. 3. *Antigone2012*

Berfin Zenderlioğlu's *Antigone2012*[73] is a Kurdish play set in the political climate of the continuous state of emergency that facilitated military rule in the Kurdish cities of Turkey from the 1980s to the 2000s. It was written and produced in a period of ongoing peace talks just three years before the re-eruption of violence that gave rise to a new state of emergency in the region in 2015. The production was in Kurdish and ran with Turkish and English subtitles in Istanbul for two seasons, performed by Destar theatre[74], an ensemble founded by Berfin Zenderlioğlu and Mirza Metin in 2008, which later changed its name to Şermola Performans. While Zenderlioğlu wrote and directed the play, she and Metin played the parts of Woman and Man respectively. According to Zenderlioğlu[75], the project was the third of a series of plays that aimed at a confrontation with the violent events of the recent past. The first play, *Reşê Şevê* [Nightmare] (2009), depicts the struggles of a traumatised Kurdish woman entrapped in a patriarchal society. The second play, *Disko 5 No'lu* [Disco No 5] (2011), takes place in Diyarbakir Prison Disco Number 5, the notorious centre of torture and violation of human rights during the 1980s. It makes use of real-life narratives, research, documentaries and interviews about the prison. The third, *Antigone2012,* focuses on the enforced disappearances during 1990s and mass graves that were dug during that time in the Kurdish regions in Turkey. The play script does not specify the exact time and place; however, the action on stage is set in 2012 as the name of the play suggests.

[73] The play is also known under the name of *Antigone2013* whilst it was produced in 2013 and post facto as *Çardeh Sal Berê* [Fourteen Years Ago].
[74] The play premiered in Istanbul in May 2012 and ran 50 performances during 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 seasons.

[75] I interviewed Berfin Zenderlioğlu on video call on 22 September 2020. All quotations are from our personal interview in Turkish, and all translations into English from the interview and the play are mine.

Since the event of enforced disappearance in the play is dated to fourteen years prior to the action on stage, then the reference to the enforced disappearances of 1990s in Turkey's Kurdistan becomes clear. We infer from Woman's narrative in the play that the killing and subsequent enforced disappearance of the brother's body took place in 1998. Zenderlioğlu states that these are political plays that deal with the theme of confronting the past and the present; however, in all three plays, there is a prevalent theme of cyclicality, of circling back to where it began instead of finding a way out of violence. Zenderlioğlu commented: "I cannot change anything. I cannot propose a solution to a problem in a setting where there is no law or democracy. I can only demonstrate. I can only relate" (Zenderlioğlu, Bodur). As violence resumed in 2015, the trilogy also tuned out to be ominously true. Zenderlioğlu's words refer to her resistant politics in making Kurdish theatre with the intention of delineating the repetitiveness of violence and calling for democracy. Within this context, *Antigone* represents the full circularity in the history of violence when the sovereign state denies its "enemies" a proper burial and the right to be grieved. Yet, it is much more than Antigone's unresolved grief and determination to bury her dead that is brought from the distant past into the present. What is carried forward is the way Antigone exposes the cruelty of the law by insisting on her right to mourn. She refuses to be contained within the discourse of the sovereign that divides people as either friend or enemy of the state, or as subservient or terrorist.

The 60-minute, one act two-hander opens in the dark with unintelligible murmuring voices, which suggests that the audience –and even the wider public– is left in the dark as to the political reality and that there are only vague voices struggling to be heard. It is the wedding night of Man and Woman. As they are preparing for sexual intercourse, Woman invites Man to a play of truth or dare, in which she ties him up and asks him questions. While Man assumes it is some form of foreplay, she starts with a disconcerting question: Where was he fourteen years ago precisely on the 18th of February? She reminds him of the day when she was 14 and her two brothers, one a soldier and the other a guerrilla fighter, had been killed in the same combat. Woman remembers that Man was also there, and the guerrilla brother's dead body was taken away. She says that she has been looking for her brother's bones and that she has been pursuing Man since then. She claims that she plotted the whole marriage affair to trap him. As tension builds up, Woman starts beating Man up and torturing him, dipping his head into a huge aquarium that occupies centre stage. For Man, the question is whether Woman has ever loved him, to which Woman replies, "I wish I could say 'I was born to join in love, not hate'; however, as I told you, for me, all was permissible to achieve my purpose" [Xwezî min bikariba vê

bigota: *"Ez hatim vê dinyayê ji bo behrkirina evînê, ne ji bo kînê..." Lê min ji te re go; Li ser vê rêyê her tişt ji bo min mubah bû.*], both alluding to the famous lines of Antigone in Sophocles[76], and underscoring that this Antigone is different, not born to share in love, but to seek revenge. After this, the events take a neurotic turn as Woman holds up a gun against Man's temple, and Man, in return, claims that he works for the intelligence service, had known this all from the start, and prepared accordingly. In this nervous moment, all Woman wants is to learn the whereabouts of her brother's bones. Man confesses that he has no memory of the events, that he has no idea why they committed those crimes, that he cannot feel or cry anymore, and that he has been having nightmares for years. Suddenly, the man unties himself and starts confessing, saying

> We received orders from above. They told us to dig a hole and throw them in. We are not to blame. We only do as we are ordered, as we have to do. If they hear that I have told you this, they will kill us both, let me tell you. Your brother and others that were killed on that day… there is a dumping ground on Multi highway… go there.
>
> [Ji jor ve ferman hat, ji me re gotin kanî bikolin û wan wiha bavêjin hundir. Em ne sûcdar in. Em tenê tiştê ku li jor dibêje, dikin, divê em bikin.Vê bizanibe; ger bibihîzin ku ez vê yekê ji te re dibêjim, ew ê me herduyan jî bikujin. Birayê te û yên wê rojê hatin kuştin... Li ser otobana Mutkî çopek mezin heye… Herin wir.]

Man takes up the gun from Woman, but as she intends to leave, he adds: "Or no, no, I am confused. Perhaps it was in Cizre. I do not remember well. It might just as well have been in Diyarbakır, just before the old city walls. Or in Istanbul… Yes, it is equally possible for him to be at the bottom of the sea in Istanbul… I cannot remember, I cannot remember where…" [Yan jî bisekine, ez şaş mam, qey ew Cizîr bû. Bi rastî nayê bîra min. Dibe ku binê sûrên bajarê Amedê jî be. Yan jî Stenbol... Belê, dibe ku li Stenbolê di binê behrê de jî be. Nizanim, nizanim li ku bû] As Man grabs a fish from the fish tank, video clips from a documentary on mass graves where human bodies and bones are excavated from the earth is displayed on a screen. After the video, the scene cycles back to the beginning with music and murmuring voices. Man and Woman walk beyond the curtain behind the stage where they are visible as shadows, joined by some others. The final stage directions comment that "this scene has the purpose of demonstrating that this cycle is not over but is still continuous" [Ev rewş nişan dike ku fetla vê çerxê neqediyaye û ji bo destnîşankirina berdewamkirina wê hîn tê bi kar anîn].

[76] οὔτοι συνέχθειν, ἀλλὰ συμφιλεῖν ἔφυν. (ll.523) (I have no enemies by birth, but I have friends by birth.) Also see Fagles, "I was born to join in love, not hate—that is my nature" (ll.590-591).

There is a very loose plot structure and next to no characterization in the play. The plot is mainly composed of a *mise en abyme* of performative ironies. At first, there seems to be a marriage, but it turns out that it is a performance designed by Woman, which also turns out to be deceptive when Man declares that he had only been playing along. Hence, it turns into a power game that blurs the line between hunter and prey. Woman, who is presented as the victim, starts torturing; whereas Man, assassin turned victim does not let go of his role as the persecutor. Yet, he falls short of it since he is totally traumatized and cannot even remember why and what he did any more. Nor can he take responsibility for his previous actions, let alone defend them. Both lose their clarity of mind in the end, turning into murmuring voices at a constant war with themselves, as well as each other. Caught in an existential crisis of absurdity and futility, the play also feels quite postmodern. As Man counters Woman's argument by saying that he had already known her secret, the intended effect could be to create a sense of panopticon of the state apparatus, the surveillance of which overpowers any individual attempts. Yet, the actual effect is exaggerated irony because this claim has no relevance for or consequences within the plot. It feels like a missed opportunity as the conflict between Man and Woman is sacrificed to the feeling of absurdity without any sense making at a deeper level. Even though it suggests a shift of power dynamics, it is simultaneously dropped, creating the impression of a not carefully articulated plot. This issue of looseness of the plot is also suggested by Bilal Akar, who criticizes the play for introducing the surprise element (Man's declaration that he had been aware of everything) too late into the play, which weakens the main conflict. According to Akar, the play has a rushed narrative in the beginning, a lagging feeling in the middle, and a sense of heightened and compact action in the end.

The lack of characterisation in the play is also marked by the anonymity of the protagonists referred to as Man and Woman. They are types, representatives rather than characters, which is suggestive of the erasure of identity enacted by enforced disappearances. They may be seen as everyman/everywoman representations, a reminder that this could happen to anyone caught up in the violence of 1990s Kurdistan. A comparable preference for anonymous characters in a similar context of torture and enforced disappearances is Eduardo Pavlovsky's *Paso de dos* [A Dance of Death] (1990), another two-hander with unnamed male and female characters, referred as *Él* [He] and *Ella* [She] in the play text, and depicting a sexualized representation of the encounter between a male torturer and his female victim during Argentina's Dirty War. According to Diana Taylor who discussed the play at length in *Disappearing Acts, Paso de dos* was concerned with themes such as "national memory and

forgetting, feelings of complicity and resistance, the desire to see the forbidden and the need to reimagine community" (11), not far from the political concerns of *Antigone2012*. In contrast to these two plays, the erasure of identities attempted by enforced disappearances finds a different kind of representation in Ariel Dorfman's *Viudas* [Widows] (1983 (novel), 1997 (play)), which, too, alludes to Sophocles' *Antigone* in its focus upon the enforced disappearances. Even though Dorfman clearly alludes to Pinochet's dictatorship in Chile, the play is set in an unnamed country under military rule, arguably in an authorial intent to subvert state hostility. Even though the setting is anonymous, *Widows* differs from the adoption of the anonymity of characters in the former plays. Sofia and the other women want to own, name, and bury the anonymous bodies found in the river as their men even though nobody is really able to identify them. What matters is not the exact identity of the dead body, but the acknowledgement of their existence. In opposition to the military who claim that they have disappeared, that they have no names, that they are neither here nor there, and so that they do not really exist, the thirty-six widows resist the sovereign discourse first and foremost discursively by insisting to recognize and to name them. According to Jennifer Wallace, "Naming the men, showing that they are not merely bodies but had a history, constitutes a vital act of resistance to the indifferent military regime" ("Tragedy and the Excavated Body" 107). Wallace's point underscores the epistemic resistance in the speech acts of the women for they do not only claim the bodies, but also insist on naming them to resist the erasure imposed by the military regime. In Dorfman, the act of naming concerns the disappeared whereas in Zenderlioğlu and Pavlovsky, the actors are different. Even so, rendering political agents anonymous mirrors and doubles the sovereign's attempted erasure of identities.

In "Sovereignty as Erasure: Rethinking Enforced Disappearances", Banu Bargu proposes to analyse enforced disappearances as a structural component of sovereign power. According to Bargu, modern sovereignty is characterised by a politics of erasure, which is performative in nature and "renders bodies, violence and history invisible" (61). "Utilized in order to create a general climate of fear and intimidation to ensure the submission of the population at large" (40), enforced disappearances are "not only a practical tactic of sovereignty, but also its discursive condition of possibility" (67). In addition to the physical elimination of the insurgent's body, "enforced disappearance involves an erasing violence" (44) as it also renders the insurgent invisible discursively, and hence performatively: "To the violability, torture, and destruction of this body, we must now add its *erasability* from existence, as the ultimate practical proof (and fantasy) of power" (63). On the part of the sovereign, this has the effect of creating the illusion

that there never was any opposition in the first place: "This is a kind of violence that seeks not only to eradicate the person who is the target of enforced disappearance but also to erase the fact that the person ever existed" (43). In that sense, enforced disappearance is firstly "an invisible form of violent punishment" (42), totally outside of the law and not accepted by the state which refuses to be held accountable. Then, it renders its targets invisible by physically erasing them. But at a deeper level, it also grants sovereignty the power of erasure, the power to determine who can exist and who can perish, which constitutes "the discursive foundations of modern sovereignty" (62).

Similar to Bargu, Hişyar Özsoy, in *Between Gift and Taboo: Death and the Negotiation of National Identity and Sovereignty in the Kurdish Conflict in Turkey*, offers a reading of the Turkish state's sovereign politics over the Kurdish dead through the Sadean logic of a second death, of killing a person twice, which also finds expression in Lacan's reading of *Antigone*. According to Lacan, who uses the Sade's idea to delineate Creon's prohibition of Polyneices' dead body, Creon condemns Polyneices to a "second death", the symbolic annihilation of a person beyond the physical killing. Lacan maintains that "[Creon] seeks to break through a barrier in striking at his enemy Polynices beyond limits within which he has right to strike him. He, in fact, wants to inflict on him that second death that he has no right to inflict on him" (Lacan 254). Adapting this idea to enforced disappearances in Kurdistan, Özsoy comments that

> …this Sadean logic of killing a life twice, first biologically then symbolically, to eradicate the persistent affective and politico-symbolic power of the Kurds it has already murdered. The sovereign act here, I suggest, is not only the exercise of the juridico-political right to kill (Agamben 1998; Foucault 2003), but to kill a body twice so as to assure that it is wasted away and relegated beyond the symbolic order where it is devoid of any meaning, value and utility (Bataille 1988; Sade 1988). (31-32)

Therefore, in addition to Mbembe's conceptualization of the necropolitical right to kill (80, 92) and Bargu's emphasis on the sovereign politics of erasure, what is at work is a denial to its target to be represented in the symbolic order. According to Özsoy, the underlying logic of enforced disappearances is this second death as the denial of recognition to the dead person in the symbolic order.

In contrast to the second death, Özsoy refers to a mother's wish to find the remains and bury the disappeared as "an attempt to bring a symbolic closure to the son's murder and re-order the destroyed boundaries between life and death" (27). Likewise, Bargu also underscores the

epistemic resistance at work in the act of the mothers of the disappeared who insistently and continuously hold vigil in Taksim Square for their children and break the invisibility created around their disappearance:

> The struggles of the families of the disappeared to make the disappeared visible, to keep alive the memory of those who have been subjected to the erasing violence of the state, are crucial in this regard. It is through their agency that the disappeared insistently establish their presence and point to the profound impossibility of sovereignty's ultimate closure into a totality. The mothers, who stage protests in which they publicly reassert the bodies of the disappeared, at times by wearing the pictures of their disappeared children, put forth a "subject who refuses to die, a subject who has been reembodied and now cannot be killed. (66-67)

The acts of the women in *Widows* parallel those of the mothers in Taksim Square or la Playa del Mayo as well as women and relatives elsewhere in the world. Like them, Woman in *Antigone2012* is in search of her brother's body and insists on reminding Man that he existed. She has been unable to find any consolation for 14 years for not giving her brother proper burial rites. Therefore, remembering, claiming, owning, and acknowledging the bodies, as well as confronting the violence of the sovereign, gain importance as performative acts within the social sphere and within language that resist the epistemic erasure imposed by the sovereign.

However, unlike the *Widows*, the mothers, and Sophocles' Antigone, she is not mourning, protesting, or speaking up in public, but she hunts the persecutor secretly in the private sphere, even within the privacy of matrimony. The public qualities of the enforced disappearances and the excavated mass graves as shown in the projected documentary are contrasted with the private quality of the setting of Woman's investigation. That the setting of the play is a "bridal chamber" evokes further references to *Antigone*. Just as Antigone famously refers to her underground vault where she will be buried alive as "O tomb, O bridal chamber, O deep-dug home"[77] (Sophocles, Lloyd-Jones, ll. 891), Woman's bridal chamber on the night of her wedding is uncannily related to death. Like Antigone, she feels like she is already married and committed to the dead. Just as Antigone walks toward her own death because of this commitment, Woman enters the bridal chamber to finally unveil the truth about her brother's death. Yet, being confined in the setting of a private bridal chamber raises some questions around female representation.

[77] ὦ τύμβος, ὦ νυμφεῖον, ὦ κατασκαφὴς οἴκησις ἀείφρουρος, (ll.891-892) also see, Fagles, "O tomb, my bridal-bed—my house, my prison / cut in the hollow rock" (ll.978-979).

With respect to Pavlovsky's *Paso de dos*, Diana Taylor is mainly critical of the pacification of women in the fictional construction of national identity and as reduced to being erotic objects. She claims that "[t]he battle in Argentina between the so-called nationalists and progressives during the twentieth century has been staged on and around the female body" (16). Likewise, in *Antigone2012*, the representation of the Turkish state as a male perpetrator in a dynamic of desire with the Kurdish activist woman brings about troublesome implications. The bridal night can also be interpreted as the performance of Kurdistan symbolically being invaded by the colonizer Man, representing Turkey. As Woman loses agency and fades away, the scene is reminiscent of Taylor's description of theatrical "disappearing acts", in which women are eliminated from the public sphere by being reduced to a metaphor for the nation. In 1990, Taylor criticised *Paso de dos* because "the play reproduced rather than dismantled the military's authoritarian discourse" and manifested an "eroticised representation of violence" (17). Although both the context and the manner are quite different and irreducible to one another, *Antigone2012*, too, is also answerable to Taylor's criticism as it shows Woman going from agency to confusion and finally despair, thereby defeated by the sovereign power. Also, even though the erotic representation that Taylor is critical of does not exist in this play at all, the introduction of the main conflict in a sexualized setting, with a Woman as a bride in her white dress, symbolic of purity and chastity, are in conformity with the association of "*la patria*", motherland or the nation with the female body and its eroticisation in militarist discourse.

In *Antigone2012*, too, the struggle for national identity is "waged between two kinds of men (conqueror/indigena; liberal/federalists; military/unmilitary" in which women have no space except as being the contested space itself (16) and the dynamics of desire between perpetrator and victim remain similar. While Zenderlioğlu's Woman is an Antigone figure in search of the burial of her brother's body and actively role playing to achieve her purpose, she is simultaneously caught in the double bind of violence between the two warring sides of men (soldier/guerrilla, state/stateless, coloniser/insurgent). Unlike Sophocles' play, Woman is not able to carry out the deed, i.e., the act of burial, and she loses her stable ground; therefore, she falls short of fulfilling her quest for agency, as well. In the end, all that is left of her is a distant murmur mixed with others and unidentifiable. One of the critics of the play, İhsan Ata, draws attention to what she perceives as this failure in the plot. She asks, "If such an able woman who

can intricately plan the whole thing turns into a weakling after she finally reaches her long-awaited moment, does not this point out to a contradiction in the creation of the character?"[78]

In *Antigone2012*, the central conflict of burial is destabilized by the resentment and revenge played out between Man and Woman. Even though all that Woman wants is to learn about the remains of her brother's bones, she cannot resist inflicting violence on Man. In the end, their aimless perambulations on the stage turn into a scene where both hunt each other down at a deeper psychological level. With this, Zenderlioğlu seems to hint at the power dynamics in revenge that culminate in the building up of endless hatred and violence. As the system that upholds the enforced disappearances continues without a process of truth and reconciliation, there is no resolution, and the cyclical nature of violence persists. In this sense, *Antigone2012* also draws on the emphasis of the repetitiveness of history as Sophocles' Antigone's 2500-year-old plot resonates with contemporary events. The giant aquarium at the centre of the stage is designed to denote the amnesia in the Turkish society regarding this recent history. In Turkish, "to have the memory of a fish" is the equivalent of the English idiom "to have a memory like a sieve", which, in this instance, becomes a metaphor for the forgetfulness that becomes the manifestation of an ongoing trauma so long as there is no confrontation with the truth of the violent events of the recent past. Like Taylor's example *Paso de dos*, *Antigone2012* is also "a work against forgetting" (16), a forgetting that is imposed by the dominant state ideology in the face of a dirty war.

Different from *Paso de dos*, *Antigone2012* aims at achieving the effects of remembering, witnessing and confronting via the documentary projected onto the stage depicting the recent excavations of mass graves where the disappeared had secretly been buried. In that sense, even though Woman as an Antigone figure, refuses to submit or forget, owns the body of her brother, and speaks truth to power, it is the documentary that is the marked agent of epistemic resistance. By showing what sovereignty refuses to acknowledge, the documentary interrupts the invisibility and erasure surrounding the violence of enforced disappearances and grants them visibility. The documentary also has the effect of reminding the audience of the contemporaneity of the issue on the stage, which is also suggested by the updated name *Antigone2012*. This witnessing and remembering becomes even more meaningful in the context of the cyclicity suggested in the dénouement of the play, and which still haunts the country today. Therefore, the questions around law/lawlessness and justice/injustice in Sophocles' *Antigone* becomes a question of

[78] Translation mine.

sovereignty declaring its authority in the right to kill and erase in the context of the Kurdish conflict in the 21st century. *Antigone2012* ends in the portrayal of this politics of sovereign control still at play even after the confrontation with the perpetrator was possible.

Even though all the engagements with *Antigone* I discussed in this chapter are focused on resisting the epistemic field created by the necropolitics of the sovereign state, *Antigone2012* does not feature the element of necroresistance, self-destruction mobilized as a resistant strategy, that we see in *Eurydice's Cry* and the examples outside the theatre, which I discussed earlier. Besides, it is more concerned about unearthing a body, than just burying one. In order to lay it to rest, first the body needs to be found and unearthed, after which proper burial rites may follow. *Antigone2012* is about resisting the death-worlds and politics of erasure imposed by necropolitical practices of enforced disappearances, and in that, it is different from the *Antigone*s that emphasize willingly and indignantly walking toward death. Therefore, if those engagements can be summed up under Tekand's phrase "Come, death!", *Antigone2012* is more about the aftermath of this death call, looking for the remains of those who uttered this phrase. As such, it is about the possibility and need for other forms of resistance to necropolitics which in Turkey is of political urgency.

Conclusion

I started this research with the question "*Why* and *how* do people in various zones of crisis embrace, interpret and adapt *Antigone* to make sense of those varying problems and reflect their political resistance?" I initially wanted to know why authors choose to rewrite an ancient tragedy to talk about contemporary political issues instead of writing a new play that could address those issues more directly and freely. I soon discovered that many of them, such as Şahika Tekand, Kamila Shamsie, Inua Ellams, Seamus Heaney, Colm Tóibín, and Anne Carson embarked on these projects because they were commissioned to rewrite the play. In most cases, instead of an innate desire that they might feel toward reworking, it was the demands of the theatre market that resulted in the proliferation of *Antigone* adaptations.

Nonetheless, these authors responded to the task of reworking *Antigone* by radically carving out an epistemic space for their various political resistances. Summarized by Ellams' phrase in Chapter II as "hacking the canon", they mobilized *Antigone*'s canonical status and perceived cultural legitimacy to communicate controversial issues. Their counter-discourse was not writing back to Sophocles or to the Western canon to destabilize some of its founding principles. Instead, they put into use what was always already a subversive element within the canonical work, i.e., the political quality of Antigone's resistance. In that sense, the constitutive outside that Antigone embodied in the classical text and within the heart of the Western Canon offered a potential for a positionality to reflect on the constitutive outsides of contemporary forms of sovereignty, and to challenge those Western assumptions of power of today. Therefore, I have demonstrated how both the protagonist and the play got to be reinvented for the

disenfranchised today as they complicate and push against the borders of Europe and its Others, the Global South and North.

My research has also indicated that, unlike most 20th century versions, 21st century reworkings underwent a significant shift in terms of the main conflict of the play. The 20th century versions such as Anouilh, Brecht, Demirel, Paulin, and Kennelly saw political struggle as centred around burial as the main conflict of the play even while they addressed other issues like sovereign power and alternative narratives. There were exceptions such as Fugard's *Island*, Femi Osofisan's *Tegonni*, or Griselda Gambaro's *Antigona Furiosa*, but the majority of adaptations still placed the play's political conflict in Antigone's subversive deed. However, by the 21st century, there was an obvious shift in *Antigone* interpretations as the plays decentred the burial issue at the heart of the tragedy in favour of how Antigone framed her political resistance performatively. At times, the burial even preceded the action on the stage, such as in Tóibín or Tekand. In others, the burial never happened as in Shamsie, Murphy, or Zenderlioğlu. When it did happen, as in Ellams, it was enveloped within another theme that recontextualized and reframed the whole play. In Ellams, this was the act of telling the story of British Muslims by way of *Antigone*, and reframing *Antigone* through a necropolitical perspective. In these versions, the centre of gravity shifted toward epistemic resistance, the recognition of peoples or individuals in their agency as knowers and seekers of alternative truths, for which the classical text provided a means. They focused mainly on the discursive and performative ways resistance and/or rebellion took place in the play and advocated for political change primarily through making space for suppressed narratives. They questioned the validity of the sovereign's claim to truth as reflected within contemporary forms of biopolitical and necropolitical regimes of power.

In engaging with epistemic resistance, 21st century versions were not just interested in the discursive dimension of resistance, but they developed a performative understanding of epistemology in which the various speech acts in the play, especially those of Antigone, did something at the moment of their utterance, as well as performative action that made a statement through enactment. Therefore, they advocated for resisting the epistemic violence that aimed at erasing alternative narratives. To understand this performative understanding of epistemic resistance, Butler's ideas on the performativity of political resistance and the iterability of Antigone's speech acts, especially in *Antigone's Claim* and *Excitable Speech*, in conversation with Spivak's formulation of epistemic violence provided the framework. Butler's rewriting of Antigone as a politically transgressive figure was a performative act within the field of political theory to carve out a space to resist epistemically. In that regard, it was not just the iterability of Antigone's performative speech acts, but also the iterability and citationality of the play that conditioned Butler's reading and her politics.

I borrowed the terminology of epistemic resistance from José Medina 's *Epistemic Resistance.* However, my use of the term remained predominantly within Butler and Spivak's conceptualizations. José Medina 's understanding of epistemic resistance developed from the field of ethics within the analytical tradition. He responded mainly to Miranda Fricker's theory of epistemic injustice, in which she concentrated on how certain people's narratives were invalidated based on social prejudice and inequalities. Contrary to Fricker, Medina regarded the social aspects of epistemic injustice as structural and suggests performative methods for epistemic friction and resistance to counter them. Yet, Medina defined epistemic resistance through certain qualities of subjects, such as epistemic virtues, lucidity, and echoability whereas for Butler and Spivak, there was no Subject behind the deed, but it was through doing that the Subject came into being. In that sense, Antigone did not perform at will, but rather language

performed through her, interpellating her. It was not an intrinsic quality of Antigone, but what happened through her speech acts that constituted her as a resisting subject.

The most important aspect in Medina's theory for the purposes of my research was his emphasis of the echoability of epistemic resistance. According to Medina, for an act of epistemic resistance to lead to social change, it had to be echoable, i.e., become part of a performative chain of resistance with transformative potential. My research also demonstrated that it was the echoability of Antigone's political resistance that found new resonances in contemporary versions. Similar to Butler's emphasis on iterability, echoability also suggested that the act of adapting *Antigone* created political alliances for resistance across time and national borders. For example, in *Antigone2012*, the tragedy became a reference point to seek truth and justice for enforced disappearances. Furthermore, in the contemporary versions, Antigone's resistance was echoed and multiplied, leading to social change. Contrary to previous representations of Antigone as a solitary figure, these versions emphasized collective action and resistance. Bonnie Honig's agonistic humanism, in which Antigone conspired with others, emphasized this quality. Just as Honig reimagined Antigone acting in sororal solidarity with Ismene, the contemporary versions also had Antigone subsume the other characters, and sometimes even the Chorus in the play. At the end of Ellams' play, the Chorus of women under the leadership of Ismene and Eurydice rose to overthrow Creon's rule. Murphy's X'ntigone was part of an underground organization with Haemon. While in *Pale Sister*, Ismene embodied and joined Antigone, in *Eurydice's Cry*, Antigone, Ismene, Haemon, and Eurydice joined in the rebellion. As such, these works mobilized and redefined the feeling of communal experience and shared suffering tragedy offered.

Even though Spivak and Butler provided the main framework to analyse Antigone's epistemic resistance, my research also addressed some blind spots in their theorization. The main

problem with Spivak's reading of the subaltern was the danger of rendering the subaltern mute and unintelligible, against which Antigone's resistance in contemporary versions offered alternatives. Even though Spivak stated that there was not discursive space for the subaltern woman to be heard or read, the struggle itself was to carve out that space epistemically and transcend the subaltern position. While Medina's model offered resistant strategies, contemporary *Antigone*s were also rich with new models for epistemic resistance. As contemporary Antigones insisted on their right to appear and assert their own truth, they also questioned the sovereign's meaning making processes based on epistemic erasure. In *Home Fire*, this was Aneeka's staged performance of her grief in front of the British Embassy and her refusal to be framed by the British press. In *Pale Sister*, Ismene's embodiment of Antigone empowered her against Creon and she was finally able to confront the king. Or in *Eurydice's Cry*, Eurydice was finally able to break her silence and crush Creon's oppressive regime.

I criticised Butler and Honig for privileging Sophocles' *Antigone* as the original model for political thought within the Western canon instead of getting into a creative dialogue with contemporary *Antigone*s in their historical and global multiplicity. My research addressed this gap by engaging with *Antigone* through postcolonial and Global South performances and critique in conversation with Butler and Honig's discussion of counter-sovereign forms of resistance, which could overturn the hegemony of the classics in politics in favour of a democratic, pluralistic, and decolonial approach. In that sense, I analysed their work in a way to initiate a creative conversation between political theory and performance traditions. The discussion of Shamsie's *Home Fire* and Ellams' *Antigone* vis a vis the issues around nationality, immigration, and the necropolitics of the British state found powerful expression by engaging with Hannah Arendt's writings on statelessness in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, which also raised a historical dialogue between Arendt's experience of Nazism and Britain's treatment of its immigrant populations today. In order to understand the form of contemporary sovereignty that governs death-worlds,

Achille Mbembe's conceptualization in *Necropolitics*, along with Andrés Fabián Henao Castro's proposal to reinvent Antigone's *metic* status for strangers (refugees, undocumented immigrants, noncitizens) in the 21st century in *Antigone in the Americas* proved useful as both Shamsie and Ellams drew attention to the in-between status of Britain's Muslim populations when it came to national identity and belonging. As I revisited Ireland's postcolonial resistance as represented through *Antigone*, I argued that the more recent plays *Pale Sister* and *X'ntigone* raised urgent concerns around rising right-wing populisms and their dictatorial potential in the neoimperialist world today. To address the issues of today, Sergio Sismondo's discussion in "Post-Truth?" as a new era of politics characterized by fake news, lies, and conspiracy theories added a contemporary discussion to Medina's conceptualization of epistemic vices and virtues as reflected through these plays.

Finally, in dealing with Turkey's unburied dead, both the discussions on sovereignty as taken up by Spivak, Butler, Foucault, and Agamben, and Mbembe's necropolitics were insufficient. Responding to them, Banu Bargu's understanding of necroresistance in *Starve and Immolate* and "Sovereignty as Erasure" helped me develop an understanding of necroresistance as it found performative expression in Tekand's *Eurydice's Cry* and Zenderlioğlu's *Antigone2012*. Tekand's play performatively made use of necroresistance to overthrow Creon's regime. Furthermore, this necroresistance of *Antigone* exceeded the borders of theatre and was also reflected through discussions on the current political crises in Turkey. Finally, the problem of enforced disappearances found expression in Zenderlioğlu's play as the protagonist, for whom memory became the site of resistance, struggled against state erasure by evoking Antigone's historical example. Finally, as such, the main axis of this thesis became bringing together these postcolonial and Global South versions, performances, and critique in conversation with Butler, Spivak, Honig, and Medina's discussions in favour of counter-sovereign forms of resistance. I particularly concentrated on the contemporary politics of adapting *Antigone* on the east and west

borders of Europe while taking into consideration Britain's, Ireland's and Turkey's relations to both neocolonialism and neoimperialism today.

In conclusion, I would like to revisit Foucault's conceptualization of genealogy to consider how the idea of epistemic resistance is reworked in the contemporary adaptations / rewritings of *Antigone*. According to Foucault, subjugated knowledges are both historical contents that have been silenced through formal systematizations and the knowledges that have been disqualified for being considered as hierarchically inferior for various reasons (7). Foucault's genealogical method is thus to bring together scholarly critique with the archaeology of buried or silenced knowledges and discourses (6-8). Taking into consideration Foucault's emphasis on "returns of knowledge" that enabled critique (7), I propose to think of Sophocles' *Antigone* as the archive or the archaeological site that facilitates this "insurrection of subjugated knowledges" (Foucault 7) that resurface in various adaptations and rewritings in the form of epistemic resistance. In a similar vein, Spivak called for a turn to colonial archives to resist epistemic violence when she wrote, "to reopen the epistemic fracture of imperialism without succumbing to the nostalgia for lost origins, the critic must turn to the archives of imperialist governance" ("Three Women's Texts" 259). In addition to going to the archives of colonialism, I think it is equally important to resurrect or mobilize the epistemic archives of the disenfranchised that are under the constant erasure of their oppressors. In this sense, the act of adapting or rewriting *Antigone* becomes a genealogy that seeks to mobilize epistemic resistance to challenge this sovereign hegemony. Reworking *Antigone* becomes an archival work to epistemically unearth in Antigone's struggle what has been suppressed but nevertheless continues to resist and rebel.

Bibliography

Agamben, Giorgio. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford, California: Stanford UP, 1998.

Ahmed, Rehana. "Towards an Ethics of Reading Muslims: Encountering Difference in Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire"*, *Textual Practice*, 5 March 2020, 1-17.

Akar, Bilal. "Suçu ve Suçluyu Övmek: Antigone [2012]" *Mimesis*. <http://www.mimesis-dergi.org> Last accessed 05 Nov. 2020.

Akbar, Arifa. "Antigone review: A poetic tragedy about modern British Muslim life" *The Guardian*. 11 Sept 2022. Last accessed 23 Dec 2022. <https://www.theguardian.com>

Anouilh, Jean. *Antigone*. Ed. Ted Freeman. Trans. Barbara Bray. London: Bloomsbury, 2009.

APGRD: The Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama. http://www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk

Arendt, Hannah. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York: Harvest, 1976.

Aristotle. *Poetics*. Trans. Stephen Halliwell. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina Press, 1986.

Arkins, Brian. *Irish Appropriation of Greek Tragedy*. Dublin: Carysfort, 2010.

Ata, İhsan. "Antigone2012 - Destar Tiyatro" Tiyatro Online. < http://tiyatronline.com/> accessed 05.11.2020.

Bargu, Banu. "Sovereignty as Erasure: Rethinking Enforced Disappearances" *Qui Parle*, 23/1, (2014), pp. 35-75.

---. *Starve and Immolate : The Politics of Human Weapons*. New York: Columbia UP, 2014.

Barnett, David. *Brecht in Practice: Theatre, Theory and Performance*. London: Bloomsbury, 2015.

Bauchau, Henry. *Antigone*. Actes Sud, 1997.

Beckett, Samuel. *The Complete Dramatic Works*. London: Faber and Faber, 2006.

Benhabib, Seyla. *The Rights of Others: Aliens, Residents, and Citizens*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004.

Benjamin, Walter. "Theses on the Philosophy of History" in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*.

Trans. Harry Zohn. Ed. Hannah Arendt. New York: Schocken Books, 2007. pp. 253-264.

Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing*. London: BBC and Penguin, 1972.

Berkowitz, Gerald. Review of *The Pale Sister*. Theatre Guide London Review. Last accessed 20 May 2023. <http://www.theatreguidelondon.co.uk/reviews/pale21.htm>

"'beyond the pale' in pale, n.[1], sense I.5.c". Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford University Press, September 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1942192466>.

Bilal, Mushtaq. "Kamila Shamsie" in *Writing Pakistan: Conversations on Identity, Nationhood and Fiction*. Delhi: Harper Collins, 2016, 133-150.

Billings, Joshua. *Genealogy of the Tragic: Greek Tragedy and German Philosophy*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2014.

Billings, Joshua and Miriam Leonard, eds. *Tragedy and the Idea of Modernity*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2015.

Binoche, Juliette and Ivo van Hove. "Death becomes her: how Juliette Binoche and Ivo van Hove remade Antigone" Interview. By Charlotte Higgins. *The Guardian*. 18 Feb. 2015. Last accessed 7 Jan. 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com>

Brah, Avtar. *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*. London: Routledge, 1996.

Brecht, Bertolt. *The Antigone of Sophocles*. In *Collected Plays: Eight. The Antigone of Sophocles, The Days of the Commune, Turandot or The Whitewasher's Congress*. Ed., Trans., and introduced by Tom Kuhn and David Constantine. London: Bloomsbury, 2003.

Britz. Two-part TV Drama. Directed by Peter Kosminsky. Performances by Riz Ahmed and Manjinder Virk. Channel 4 (UK), 2007.

Brown, Terence. "An Uncompromising Female Spirit". In Kennelly. pp. 57-8.

Buffini, Moira. *Welcome to Thebes*. London: Faber and Faber, 2010.

Buis, Katelyn J. *Surviving Antigone: Anouilh, Adaptation and the Archive*. (Unpublished Master's Thesis). Ohio: Bowling Green State University, 2014.

Busia, Abena P.A. "Silencing Sycorax: On African Colonial Discourse and the Unvoiced Female" *Cultural Critique* , 14, Winter 1989-1990. pp. 81-104.

Butler, Anthea. "Charleston shooting: Black and Muslim killers are 'terrorists' and 'thugs'. Why are white shooters called 'mentally ill'?" *The Independent*. 19 June 2015. *The Washington Post* 18 June 2015.

Butler, Judith. *Antigone's Claim: Kinship between Life and Death*. New York: Columbia UP, 2000.

---. *Bodies That Matter*. New York: Routledge, 2011.

---. *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*. New York: Routledge, 1997.

---. *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 2015.

---. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory" *Theatre Journal*, 40/4 (1988), pp. 519-531.

---. *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. London: Verso, 2006.

---. "Rethinking Vulnerability and Resistance" in Judith Butler, Zeynep Gambetti and Leticia Sabsay (Eds.), *Vulnerability in Resistance* (pp. 12-27). Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2016.

---. *Undoing Gender*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Cambria, Mariavita. "1984: Antigon-izing the Irish stage", *K. Revue trans-européenne de philosophie et arts*, 1/2018. pp. 107-119.

Carson, Anne, trans. *Antigone*. By Sophocles. London: Oberon, 2015.

Castro, Andrés Fabián Henao. "Antigone Claimed: 'I Am a Stranger!' Political Theory and the Figure of the Stranger" *Hypatia* 28 / 2, 2013.

---. *Antigone in the Americas: Democracy, Sexuality, and Death in the Settler Colonial Present*. New York: SUNY, 2021.

---. "Can the Palestinian Antigone Grieve? A Political Reinterpretation of Judith Butler's Ethical Turn", Settler Colonial Studies, 2019. DOI: 10.1080/2201473X.2019.1675460

Cavendish, Dominic. "Antigone: pours a provocative gallon of petrol on the play's eternal flame" *The Telegraph*. 11 Sept 2022. Last accessed 23 Dec 2022. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk>

Chalandon, Sorj. *Le Quatrième Mur*. Grasset, 2013.

Chang, Dongshin. "Democracy at War: *Antigone: Insurgency* in Toronto". In Mee and Foley.

Chanter, Tina. "Antigone's Political Legacies: Abjection in Defiance of Mourning" in *Interrogating Antigone: From Philosophy to Performance*, ed. S. E. Wilmer and Audrone Zukauskaite. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010. pp. 75-97.

---. *Whose Antigone? The Tragic Marginalization of Slavery*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011.

Clifford, James. "Diasporas" *Cultural Anthropology*, Aug 1994, Vol. 9, No. 3, pp. 302-338.

Constantine, David. Introduction. *Hölderlin's Sophocles: Oedipus and Antigone*. Trans. David Constantine. Northumberland: Bloodaxe Books, 2001.

Cox, Lara. "Spotlight On 'Pale Sister': On Lighting in Digital Theatre" *The Theatre Times* 29 May 2021. Last accessed 29 June 2022. < https://thetheatretimes.com/>

Crawley, Peter. "*Pale Sister* Review: Colm Tóbín's play more eager to meet a reader than a spectator". *The Irish Times*. 5 Nov. 2019. Last accessed 29 May 2023. <https://www.irishtimes.com>

Crisp, Lauren. "Antigone review: Sophocles is dragged into modern London" *City A.M.* 16 Sept 2022. Last accessed 23 Dec 2022. < https://www.cityam.com>

David, Caroline. "Review: Antigone updated to a British Muslim tragedy" *Ham & High*. 12 Sept 2022. Last accessed 23 Dec 2022. <https://www.hamhigh.co.uk>

David, Clive. "Antigone review: a nuance-free attempt to match Sophocles with politics" *The Times*. 12 Sept 2022. Last accessed 23 Dec 2022. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk>

Davies, Peter Ho. "An 'Antigone' for a Time of Terror" *The New York Times*. 29 Sept 2017. Last accessed 5 Jan 2023. <https://www.nytimes.com>

Dearden, Lizzie. "Shamima Begum: Number of people stripped of UK citizenship soars by 600% in a year". Independent. 20 Feb 2019. Accessed online 3 April 2021. <https://www.independent.co.uk/>

Demirel, Kemal. *Antigone*. İstanbul: Yankı Yayınları, 1966.

Derrida, Jacques. "Signature Event Context" in *Limited Inc*. Evanston: Nothwestern UP, 1988. pp. 1-21.

---. "The Theater of Cruelty and the Closure of Representation" in *Writing and Difference*. Trans. Alan Bass. London: Routledge, 2002. pp. 292-316.

Dillon, John and S. E. Wilmer, eds. *Rebel Women: Staging Ancient Greek Drama Today*. London: Methuen, 2005.

Dil Se. Directed by Mani Ratnam. Performances by Shah Rukh Khan and Manisha Koirala. Madras Talkies, Varma Corporation, 1998.

Di Maria, Salvatore. "Italian Reception of Greek Tragedy" in *A Companion to Greek Tragedy*. Ed. Justina Gregory. Oxford: Blackwell, 2005. pp. 428-44

Dinçel, Burç İdem. *Translating the Tragic: Mimetic Transformation of Attic Tragedies on the Contemporary Stage*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. Dublin: Trinity College Dublin, 2019.

Dobson, Chris. "Review: 'Antigone', Regent's Park Open Air Theatre" *The Understudy*. 10 Sept 2022. Last accessed 23 Dec 2022. <https://www.theunderstudy.co.uk>

Donnellan, Declan. *Antigone. By Sophocles. In a new version by Declan Donnellan*. London: Oberon, 1999.

Dowden, Neil. "'Antigone': Review. Regent's Open Air Theatre" *Plays International*. Last accessed 23 Dec 2022. < https://playsinternational.org.uk>

Draz, Marie. "The Queer Heroics of Butler's Antigone" in *The Returns of Antigone. Interdisciplinary Essays*. Eds. Tina Chanter and Sean D. Kirkland. Albany: SUNY Press, 2014. pp. 205-222.

Dreyer, Matthias. "Caesura of History: Performing Greek Tragedy after Brecht" *Performance Philosophy* Vol. 2, no. 2 (2017): pp. 241-256.

Driss, Hager Ben. "Global Epistemic Injustice: An Ethical Confrontation with Jihadism". *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Education*, 2020, 15(2), pp. 23-35.

Duarte, Bruno. "Rhythm and Structure: Brecht's *Antigone* in Performance*" Performance Philosophy* Vol. 2, no. 2 (2017): pp. 222–40.

Dunton, Chris. *Make man talk true: Nigerian drama in English since 1970*. London: Hans Zell publishers, 1992.

Durbach, Errol. "Sophocles in South Africa: Athol Fugard's *The Island*" *Comparative Drama* 18.3 (Fall 1984): pp.252-64.

Durudoğan, Hülya. "Başkaldırıdan Felsefeye: İoanna Kuçuradi" *Bianet*, 12 July 2010. <https://m.bianet.org/> Accessed 26 Nov. 2020.

Dwan, Lisa. "A new Antigone: actress Lisa Dwan on misogyny, female stories and why it's time to speak up" *Evening Standard*. 29 March 2021. Last accessed 29 June 2022. <www.standard.co.uk>

---. "Courage Is What Happens When We Lean Into Our Fear" *Grazia*. 3 March 2021. Last accessed 29 June 2022. <https://graziadaily.co.uk>

"Edward Colston Statue: Protesters Tear Down Slave Trader Monument". 8 June 2020. Accessed 15 June 2022. <www.bbc.co.uk>.

Elçi, Türkan. "Antigone" *Gazete Duvar*. 18 June 2021. Last accessed 24 June 2023. <https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/antigone-haber-1525878>.

Elden, Stuart. "The Place of The Polis: Political Blindness in Judith Butler's Antigone's Claim." *Theory & Event*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2005, pp. 1. *ProQuest*, https://ezp.lib.cam.ac.uk/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/place-polis-political-blindness-judith-butlers/docview/210781040/se-2?accountid=9851.

Ellams, Inua. *Antigone: after Sophocles*. London: Methuen, 2022.

---. In conversation with Helen Eastman. *APGRD – Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama*, 31 Oct. 2022. Last accessed on YouTube on 7 Jan. 2023. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tXFiXyDE8UY >.

---. Interview. "Barber Shop Chronicles playwright Inua Ellams: 'I spent the longest part of my life at risk of deportation'" By Ava Wong Davies. *iNews*. 30 August 2022. Last accessed 23 Dec 2022. <https://www. inews.co.uk>

---. Personal Interview. 2 Nov. 2022.

"English pale, n.". Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford University Press, July 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/8892621841>

Erincin, Serap. "Performing Rebellion: Eurydice's Cry in Turkey" in *Antigone on the Contemporary World Stage*, edited by Erin B. Mee and Helene P. Foley. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2011. pp. 171-183.

Euripides. *Fragments*: *Oedipus-Chrysippus, Other Fragments*, Ed. and Trans. Christopher Collard and Martin Cropp, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard UP, 2008.

Findlay, Polly. Interview. By Laura Swift. *Practitioners' Voices in Classical Reception Studies*. 5(2014). <https://www.open.ac.uk/arts/research/pvcrs/2014/findlay>

---. "Muscles, magic and suicide bombers". Interview. By *Lyn Gardner*. *The Guardian*. 30 May 2012. Last accessed 7 Jan. 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com/>

Fischer-Lichte, Erika. "Politicizing *Antigone*" in *Interrogating Antigone in Postmodern Philosophy and Criticism*. Eds. S. E. Wilmer and Audrone Zukauskaite. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2011. pp. 329-352.

---. *Tragedy's Endurance: Performances of Greek Tragedies and Cultural Identity in Germany since 1800*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.

---. "Philosophical Theatre: Some Reflections on the Concept." *Anglia*, vol. 136, no. 1, (2018): pp. 43–60.

Fleming, Katie. "Fascism on Stage: Jean Anouilh's Antigone" In V. Zajko & M. Leonard (Eds.), *Laughing with Medusa: Classical myth and feminist thought* (pp. 163-186). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Foley, Helene P. "Milennial Antigone Revisited: Anouilh in the USA" in Erin B. Mee & Helen P. Foley (Eds.), *Antigone on the Contemporary World Stage.* (pp. 373-391). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Foucault, Michel. *"Society Must be Defended": Lectures at the Collège de France 1975-1976*. Eds. Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana. Trans. David Macey. New York: Picador, 2003.

---. *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought,* Ed. Paul Rabinow. Penguin: Middlesex, 1991.

---. "Truth and Power" in *Power/Knowlegde: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1971-1977*, ed. C. Gordon, trans. C. Gordon, L. Marshall, J. Mepham, K. Soper. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1980.

Freeman, Ted. Introduction. *Antigone*. Jean Anouilh London: Bloomsbury, 2009.

Freud, Sigmund. "The Unconscious". *SE*, 14: 159-204. London: Vintage, 2001.

Fricker, Miranda. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007.

Fugard, Athol et al. *The Township Plays*. Ed. Dennis Walder. Oxford and Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Gambaro, Griselda. *Antigona Furiosa,* in *Information for Foreigners: Three Plays by Griselda Gambaro*. Ed. And Trans. Marguerite Feitlowitz. Illinois: Northwestern UP, 1992. pp. 134-159.

Garruba, Harry. "The Island Writes Back: Discourse / Power and Marginality in Wole Soyinka's "The Swamp Dwellers," Derek Walcott's "The Sea at Dauphin," and Athol Fugard's "The Island" *Research in African Literatures* 32: 4, (Winter 2001): pp. 61–76.

Gébler, Carlo. *I, Antigone*. Dublin: New Island, 2021.

Gibbs, James. "Antigone and her African Sisters: West African Versions of a Greek Original" in *Classics and Postcolonial Worlds*, ed. Lorna Hardwick and Carol Gillespie. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. pp.54-72.

Gilbert, Helen and Joanne Tompkins. *Post-Colonial Drama: theory, Practice, Politics*. London: Routledge, 1996.

Goff, Barbara and Michael Simpson. *Crossroads in the Black Aegean: Oedipus, Antigone, and Dramas of the African Diaspora*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007.

Goldhill, Simon. *Sophocles and the Language of Tragedy*. New York: Oxford UP, 2012.

---. "The ends of tragedy: Schelling, Hegel, and Oedipus". In J. Billings & M. Leonard (Eds.), *Tragedy and the idea of modernity* Oxford: Oxford UP, 2015. pp. 231-250.

Gontarski, S.E., ed. *On Beckett: Essays and Criticism*. London: Anthem Press, 2012.

---, ed. *The Edinburgh Companion to Samuel Beckett and the Arts*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2014.

---. "Samuel Beckett and the 'Idea' of Theatre: Performance through Artaud and Deleuze" *The Cambridge New Companion to Samuel Beckett*. Edited by Dirk Van Hulle. NewYork: Cambridge UP, 2015. pp. 126-144.

--- and Chris J. Ackerley, eds. *The Faber companion to Samuel Beckett: A Reader's Guide to his Works, Life, and Thought*. London: Faber, 2006.

Gotsi, Aikaterini. *Irish Antigones*. Unpublished PhD Thesis. Department of Comparative Literature. University College London. February 2012.

Gould, Timothy. "The Unhappy Performative". in *Performativity and Performance*. Eds. Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedwick. New York and London: Routledge, 1995. pp. 19-44.

Griffith, Mark, ed. *Sophocles Antigone*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999.

Gürün, Dikmen. "Sophocles Interpretations in Turkish Theatre" in *Staging of Classical Drama around 2000,* edited by Pavlína N. Šípová and Alena Sarkissian. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007. pp. 122-131.

Habif, Verda. *Antik Yunanda Oyunculuk ve Çağdaş Uygulamalar*. Unpublished Master's Thesis. İstanbul: İstanbul University, 2008.

Haddad, Hubert. *Palestine*. Éditions Zulma, 2007.

Hall, Edith. "Internalization of Theatre in Antiquity" in Mee and Foley, pp.51-66.

---, Finona Macintosh, and Amanda Wrigley, eds. *Dionysus Since 69: Greek Tragedy at the Dawn of the Third Millenium*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004.

Hall, Edith and Fiona Macintosh. *Greek Tragedy and the British Theatre 1660-1914*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005.

Hall, Stuart. "Thinking the Diaspora: Home Thoughts from Abroad" *Essential Essays 2: Identity and Diaspora*, Ed. David Morley. Durham: Duke UP, 2018.

Hardwick, Lorna and Carol Gillespie, eds. *Classics in Postcolonial Worlds.* Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007.

Harkin, Hugh. "Irish Antigones: Towards Tragedy without Borders?" *Irish University Review*, 2008, Vol. 38, No. 2), pp. 292-309.

Hasan, Zainab. "Zainab Hasan: a remarkable star calling time on stereotypes". Interview. By Arifa Akbar. *The Guardian*. 3 Feb 2021. Last accessed 23 Dec 2022. <https://www.theguardian.com>

Haynes, Natalie. *The Children of Jocasta*. London: Picador, 2017.

Heaney, Seamus. *The Burial at Thebes: Sophocles' Antigone*. London: Faber and Faber, 2014.

---. "'Me' as in 'Metre': On Translating *Antigone*" in *Rebel Women: Staging Ancient Greek Drama Today*. Eds. John Dillon and S.E. Wilmer. London: Methuen, 2005. pp. 169-176.

---. "The Jayne Lecture: Title Deeds: Translating a Classic." *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, vol. 148, no. 4, 2004, pp. 411–26.

Hegel, G. W. F. *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. Trans. A. V. Miller. New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.

Hemming, Sarah. "Review: Antigone". *Financial Times*. 15 Sept 2022. Last accessed 23 Dec. 2022. <https://www.ft.com>

Home Office Statement. *ITV*. "May: Jihadists fighting in Syria to be 'stripped of nationality'" 22 Dec 2013. Accessed online on 3 April 2021. <https://www.itv.com/news/update/2013-12-22/home-office-british-citizenship-is-a-privilege-not-a-right/>

Honig, Bonnie. *Antigone Interrupted*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2013.

hooks, bell. "The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators" in *Black Looks: Race and Representation*. New York: Routledge, 2015. pp. 115-132.

Hove, Ivo van. *Antigone*. Production website. *Toneelgroepamsterdam*. <https://tga.nl/en/productions/antigone>

Hölderlin, Friedrich. *Hölderlin's Sophocles: Oedipus and Antigone*. Trans. David Constantine. Northumberland: Bloodaxe Books, 2001.

Huizinga, Johan. *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture*. OH: Angelico Press, 2016.

Hulle, Dirk van. *The New Cambridge Companion to Samuel Beckett*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2015.

Hutcheon, Linda. *A Theory of Adaptation*. London and New York: Routledge, 2013.

Innes, Christopher. *Avant-garde Theatre 1892-1992*. London: Routledge, 2005.

--- and Shevtsova, Maria. *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Directing*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2013.

Ioannidou, Eleftheria. *Greek Fragments in Postmodern Frames: Rewriting Tragedy 1970-2005*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Irigaray, Luce. *The speculum of the other woman*. Trans. G. C. Gill. New York: Cornell University Press, 1985.

Keating, Sara. "Colm is an 'extraordinary' writer of women ... 'in the 1950s'" Interview with Colm Tóibín and Lisa Dwan. 24 Oct. 2019. Last accessed 29 June 2022. <www.irishtimes.com>

Keaveney, Jim. "Audio Review: *Pale Sister*, Audible". *The Understudy*. 1 Feb 2023. Last accessed 29 May 2023. <https://www.theunderstudy.co.uk>

Kennelly, Brendan. *Antigone*. In *When Then is Now: Three Greek Tragedies*. Eastburn: Bloodaxe Books, 2017. pp. 9-68.

Kilimci, Ayşe. "Sahi, Neredesin Antigone?" kadınmedya.com, 2 August 2011. Last accessed 24 June 2023 < https://www.izmirizmir.net/ayse-kilimci-sahi-neredesin-antigone-y1968.html>.

Konuk, Kader. *East-West Mimesis: Auerbach in Turkey*, Stanford: Stanford UP, 2010.

Kozağaçlı, Selçuk. "7-11 Kasım Savunma" [Court Defence] *Çağdaş Hukukçular Derneği*. Last accessed 15 June 2023. <https://cagdashukukcular.org/yayin/selcuk-kozagacli-7-11-kasim-savunma/>.

Kramer, Sina. "Outside/In: Antigone and the Limits of Politics" in *The Returns of Antigone. Interdisciplinary Essays*. Eds. Tina Chanter and Sean D. Kirkland. Albany: SUNY Press, 2014. pp. 173-186.

Kuçuradi, İoanna. *Sanata Felsefeyle Bakmak*. İstanbul: Türkiye Felsefe Kurumu Yayınları, 2009.

Kuhn, Tom and David Constantine. Introduction. *Collected Plays of Bertolt Brecht: Eight. The Antigone of Sophocles, The Days of the Commune, Turandot or The Whitewasher's Congress*. Ed., Trans., and introduced by Tom Kuhn and David Constantine. London: Bloomsbury, 2003.

Lacan, Jacques. *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis 1959-1960. The seminar of Jacques Lacan. Book VII*. Jacques-Allain Miller (Eds.). (Dennis Porter, Trans.). New York and London: W. W. Norton and Company, 1997.

Lardinois André. "Antigone" in Kirk Ormand, ed. pp. 55-68.

Lehmann, Hans-Thies. *Postdramatic Theatre*. Trans. Karen Jürs-Munby. Oxon: Routledge, 2006.

Leonard, Miriam. *Athens in Paris: Ancient Greece and the Political in Post-War French Thought*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005.

Lloyd, David. "Frames of Reference" in *Beckett and Ireland*. Ed. Séan Kennedy. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010.

Lloyd, Michael. "Greek Tragedy in Ireland 2022." *Classics Ireland*, vol. 28, 2021, pp. 76–78.

Loraux, Nicole. M*others in Mourning*. Trans. Corinne Pache. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1998.

Lurie, Michel. "Facing up to Tragedy: Toward an Intellectual History of Sophocles in Europe from Camerarius to Nietszche" in Kirk Ormand, pp. 440-461.

Macintosh, Fiona. "Irish Antigone and Burying the Dead" in Mee and Foley eds., pp. 91-103.

Marlowe, Sam. "Antigone Review" *The Stage*. 12 Sept 2022. Last accessed 23 Dec 2022. <https://www.thestage.co.uk>

Masters, Mercedes and Salvador Santino F. Regilme, Jr., "Human Rights and British Citizenship: The Case of Shamima Begum as Citizen to *Homo Sacer*", *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, 12/ 2, July 2020, pp 341–363.

Mbembe, Achille. *Necropolitics*. Durham and London: Duke UP, 2018.

McCormack, Chris. "X'ntigone review: Contemporary spin on Greek tragedy loses its way". *The Irish Times*. 17 Mar 2022. Last accessed 29 May 2023. <https://www.irishtimes.com/>

McCracken, Kathleen. "Site of Recovery: Brendan Kennelly's *Antigone*". In Kennelly. pp. 59-68.

McCafferty, Owen. *Antigone. By Sophocles. In a New Version by Owen McCafferty*. Belfast: Prime Cut, NHB, 2008.

McDonald, Marianne and J. Michael Walton, eds. *Amid Our Troubles: Irish Versions of Greek Tragedy*. London: Methuen, 2002.

McDonald, Marianne. "The Irish and Greek Tragedy" in McDonald and Walton, eds.

Meany, Helen. "Pale Sister review – Colm Tóibín and Lisa Dwan's twist on Antigone" *The Guardian*. 7 Nov. 2019. Last accessed 29 May 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com>

---. "X'ntigone review – Culture Wars Rage Before Freedom Day in Thebes" *The Guardian*. 18 Mar 2022. Last accessed 29 May 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com>

Medina, José. *The Epistemology of Resistance: Gender and Racial Oppression, Epistemic Injustice, and Resistant Imaginations*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Mee, Erin B. and Helen P. Foley, eds. *Antigone on the Contemporary World Stage* Oxford: Oxford UP, 2011.

Meltzer, Françoise. "Theories of Desire: Antigone Again." *Critical Inquiry*, 37: 2, (Winter 2011): pp. 169–86.

Mohdin, Aamna and Rhi Storer. "Tributes to Slave Traders and Colonialists Removed across UK". 29 Jan 2021. Accessed 15 June 2022. <www.theguardian.com >.

Morrison, Conall. *Antigone*. Unpublished manuscript. 2003.

Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" in *Visual and Other Pleasures*. New York: Palgrave, 1989. pp. 14-28.

Murphy, Darren. *X'ntigone: after Sophocles*. London: Bloomsbury, 2022.

---. "X'ntigone: Darren Murphy" Video Clip. MAC Belfast. 20 Jan 2022. Last accessed 29 June 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OIvufvkZiOw>

Murray, Christopher. "Three Irish Antigones". In *Perspectives of Irish Drama and Theatre*. Eds. Jacqueline Genet and Richard Allen Cave. Gerrads Cross: Colin Smythe, 1991. pp. 115-1129.

Nicholas E. Johnson. "'Void cannot go': trauma and actor process in the theatre of Samuel Beckett" in *Samuel Beckett and Trauma*. Edited by Mariko Hori Tanak. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018.

O'Brien, Conor Cruise. *States of Ireland*. St. Albans: Panther, 1974.

O'Dell, Liam. "'Antigone' review: Inua Ellams converts classic into captivating commentary on citizenship". 10 Sept 2022. Last accessed 23 Dec 2022. <https://liamodell.com>

Ormand, Kirk, ed. *A Companion to Sophocles*. Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World. West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2012.

O'Rourke, Chris. Review of *X'ntigone after Sophocles' Antigone*. *The Arts Review*. 17 Mar 2022. Last accessed 29 May 2023. <https://www.theartsreview.com>

Osofisan, Femi. *Recent Outings: comprising "Tegonni: An African Antigone" and "Many Colours Make the Thunder-King"* Ibadan: Opon Ifa Readers, 1999.

O'Sullivan, Rory. Review. "X'ntigone at the Peacock: Amanda Gorman in Combat Boots". *Village Magazine*. 24 Mar 2022. Last accessed 29 May 2023. <https://villagemagazine.ie/>

Özsoy, Hişyar. Between *Gift and Taboo: Death and the Negotiation of National Identity and Sovereignty in the Kurdish Conflict in Turkey*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation. University of Texas at Austin, 2010.

Paulin, Tom. "Antigone". In McDonald and Walton, eds.

---. *The Riot Act: A Version of Antigone by Sophocles*. London: Faber and Faber, 1985.

Puchner, Walter. *Greek Theatre Between Antiquity and Independence*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2017.

Quinn, Michael. Review of *X'ntigone*. *British Theatre Guide*. <https://www.britishtheatreguide.info/>

"pale, adj.". Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford University Press, September 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/4324954179>.

Raji, Wumi. "Africanizing Antigone: Postcolonial Discourse and Strategies of Indigenizing a Western Classic," *Research in African Studies* 36.4 (Winter 2005): pp.135-54.

Rehm, Rush. "'If you are a Woman': Theatrical Womanizing in Sophocles' Antigone and Fugard, Kani, and Ntshona's The Island," in *Classics and Postcolonial Worlds*, Lorna Hardwick and Carrol Gillespie, eds. pp. 349-63.

Remoundou Howley, Anastasia. *Palimpsests of Antigone: Contemporary Irish Versions of Greek Tragedy*. Unpublished PhD Thesis. Department of Classics. School of Languages, Literatures & Cultures. National University of Ireland, Galway. Nov. 2010.

"Rishi Sunak's first speech as Prime Minister" 25 October 2022. Speech. *Gov.uk*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/prime-minister-rishi-sunaks-statement-25-october-2022>

Roche, Anthony. "Ireland's *Antigones*: Tragedy North and South" In *Cultural Contexts and Literary Idiom in Contemporary Irish Literature*. Ed. Michael Kenneally. Gerrads Cross, Colin Smythe, 1988.

Roose-Evans, James. *Experimental Theatre: From Stanislavsky to Peter Brook*. New York: Routledge, 2008.

Rosen, Jeremy. *Minor Characters Have Their Day: Genre and the Contemporary Literary Marketplace*. New York: Columbia UP, 2016.

Roy-Bhattacharya, Joydeep. *The Watch*. London: Vintage, 2013.

Saville, Alice. "Antigone review" *Time Out*. 12 Sept 2022. Last accessed 23 Dec 2022. <https://www.timeout.com>

Schmitt, Carl. *Political Theology. Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*. Trans. by G. Schwab, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.

Selman, Chris. "Modern adaptation of Antigone is a bold and powerful social commentary – review" *Gay Times*. Last accessed 23 Dec 2022. <https://gaytimes.co.uk>

Sezer, Sennur. "Antigone Bu Topraklarda Yaşıyor", *Evrensel*. 31 July 2011.

Shamsie, Kamila. "Exiled". *The Guardian*. 17 Nov 2018. Last accessed 7 Jan 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com>.

---. *Home Fire*. London: Bloomsbury, 2017.

---. "I don't know who I'd be if I wasn't a writer": Interview. By Fiona Tolan. *Contemporary Women's Writing*, 13 (2), 2020. pp. 119-133. ISSN 1754-1476.

---. "Kamila Shamsie: Home Fire" A conversation with Sonia Nair. Wheeler Centre, 8 July 2019. Accessed on YouTube on 10 Feb 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ilRKfXn_ZFU>.

---. "Reimagining Antigone for the Age of Extremism: A Conversation with Kamila Shamsie" Interview. By Chris McDonough and Stephanie McCarter, *Eidolon*, 2017. <https://eidolon.pub/reimagining-antigone-for-the-age-of-extremism-e3d201e75a42>.

---. "The Watch by Joydeep Roy-Bhattacharya" Review. *The Guardian*. 15 June 2012. Last accessed 7 Jan 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com>.

---. "True Story: Kamila Shamsie on predicting the rise of Sajid Javid". *The Guardian*. 3 May 2018. Last accessed 7 Jan 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com>.

Sidiropoulou, Avra. *Authoring Performance: The Director in Contemporary Theatre*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Sirman, Nükhet. "When Antigone is a Man: Feminist Trouble in the Late Colony" in *Vulnerability in Resistance*. Eds. Judith Butler, Zeynep Gambetti and Leticia Sabsay. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2016. pp. 191-210.

Sismondo, Sergio. "Casting a wider net: A reply to Collins, Evans and Weinel". Social Studies of Science, 47/4 (August 2017), pp. 587-592.

---. Editorial: "Post-truth?" Social Studies of Science, 47/1 (February 2017), pp. 3-6.

Slovo, Gillian. *Another World: Losing Our Children to Islamic State*. London: Oberon, 2016.

Smith, Ali. *The Story of Antigone*. London: Pushkin Children's, 2011.

Sophocles. *Antigone*, in *The Three Theban Plays: Antigone, Oedipus the King, Oedipus at Colonus*. Trans. Robert Fagles. London: Penguin, 1984.

Söderbäck, Fanny, ed. *Feminist Readings of Antigone*. New York: SUNY Press, 2010.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *"Can the Subaltern Speak?" Reflections on the History of an Idea*. Ed. Rosalind C. Morris. New York: Columbia UP, 2010.

---. "'Draupadi' by Mahasveta Devi" *Critical Inquiry*, 8/ 2, 1981. pp. 381-402.

---. "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism" *Critical Inquiry*, 1985, 12(1), pp.243-261.

Stamatopoulou-Vasilakou, Chrysothemis. "Greek Theater in Southeastern Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean from 1810 to 1961." Journal of Modern Greek Studies, Volume 25, Number 2, October 2007, pp. 267-284. The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Steiner, George. *Antigones*: *The Antigone Myth in Western Literature, Art and Thought*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984.

Oidipus Nerede? ["Where is Oedipus?] *Studio Oyuncuları*, accessed 1 May 2020, <studiooyunculari.com/oyunlar/oidipus-nerede>.

Szondi, Peter. *An Essay on the Tragic*. Trans. Paul Fleming. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2002.

Şahin-Hamidi, Elif. "'Çağdaş Antigone' ya da 'İyi Ana': İoanna Kuçuradi" in *İnsanokur*. Reprinted from Remzi Kitap Gazetesi, April 2014. <www.insanokur.org>.

Taiwo, E. F. "Deconstructing the 'Fourth Wall': Metatheatricality in Plautus' Miles Gloriosus and Osofisan's Tegonni". Canadian Social Science, Vol. 10, No: 5, 2014, pp. 146-152.

Taplin, Oliver. *Greek Tragedy in Action*. Cambridge: Methuen, 1978.

Taylor, Diana. *Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina's Dirty War*. Durham and London: Duke UP, 1997.

Taxidou, Olga. "Machines and Models for Modern Tragedy: Brecht / Berlau Antigone-Model 1948". In Rita Felski (Ed.), *Rethinking Tragedy*. (pp. 241-262). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008.

Tekand, Şahika. Director's Notes to *Eurydice's Cry*. Unpublished Notes. Istanbul, 2006.

---. *Eurydice's Cry* in *Solum and Other Plays from Turkey*. Edited by Serap Erincin. Translated by Serap Erincin and Mark Ventura. Seagull Books: London, 2010. pp. 62-129.

---. Personal Interview. 19 April 2019.

---. Interview. "Sanat Güncel Politikaya Feda Edilemeyecek Bir Şey". Conducted by Nuray Büyükdağ. 11 Feb 2020. Web. Accessed 20 June 2020. <https://t24.com.tr>

---. Interview. "Şahika Tekand ile Söyleşi". Conducted by Kerem Karaboğa. In *Tragedya ile Sınırları Aşmak: Theodoros Terzopoulos'un Tiyatrosu*. İstanbul: E Yayınları, 2008. pp. 170-186.

---. Interview. Conducted by Tuğba Sorgun. *Godot'yu Beklerken Oyununda Zamansallık: Şahika Tekand'ın Godot'yu Beklerken Oyununu Sahnelemesi Örneği.* İstanbul: August 2019. Master's Thesis. pp. 97-100. 17 May 2019.

---. "Şimdi Oyundan Çekilme Vakti". Interview conducted by Efnan Atmaca. Radikal. 6 June 2006. Web. 10 March 2020. < http://www.radikal.com.tr/kultur/simdi-oyundan-cekilme-vakti-782471/>

"Terror in America / 'We're Going to Smoke Them Out': President Airs His Anger" *The New York Times*. By Brian Knowlton. 19 Sept. 2001. <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/09/19/news/terror-in-america-were-going-to-smoke-them-out-president-airs-his-anger.html>.

Tiffin, Helen, "Post-Colonial Literatures and Counter Discourse" *Kunapipi* 9(3), 1987.

Tóibín, Colm. "Author's Note". In *Pale Sister*. Loughcrew: Gallery Books, 2019.

---. *Heather Blazing*. London: Picador, 2011.

---. *House of Names*. London: Penguin, 2018.

---. *Pale Sister*. Loughcrew: Gallery Books, 2019.

---. "Sister Act: Colm Tóibín on Adapting Antigone for the Gate" 25 Oct. 2019. Last accessed 29 June 2022. <https://www.rte.ie>

---. *The Story of the Night*. London: Picador, 1996.

---. *The Testament of Mary*. London: Penguin, 2013.

Torrance, Isabelle. "Post-Ceasefire Antigones and Northern Ireland". In *Classics and Irish Politics, 1916–2016*. Ed. by Isabelle Torrance and Donncha O'Rourke, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2020.

Tripney, Natasha. "Antigone at Regent's Park Open Air Theatre review: A valuable message blunted by heavy-handedness" *Evening Standard*. 12 Sept 2022. Last accessed 23 Dec 2022. <https://www.standard.co.uk>

Wallace, Jennifer. *The Cambridge Introduction to Tragedy*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007.

---. *Tragedy since 9/11: Reading a World out of Joint*. London: Bloomsbury, 2020.

---. "'We Can't Make More Dirt...': Tragedy and the Excavated Body" *The Cambridge Quarterly*, 2003, 32/2. pp. 103-111.

Walsh, Keri. "Allied Antigone: Jean Anouilh in America and England. "*Modernism / Modernity*, 23: 2 (April 2016): pp. 277–95.

Webb, Eugene. T*he Plays of Samuel Beckett*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014.

Weiss, Katherine. *The Plays of Samuel Beckett.* Critical Companions. London: Methuen Drama, 2012.

Weiss, Naomi. "Tragic Form in Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire". Classical Receptions Journal*. Volume 14, Issue 2, April 2022, pp. 240–263.

Weyenberg, Astrid Van. *The Politics of Adaptation: Contemporary African Drama and Greek Tragedy*. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2013.

Wilmer, Stephen E. "Finding a Post-Colonial Voice for Antigone: Seamus Heaney's *Burial at Thebes*" in Classics in Post-Colonial Worlds. Eds. Lorna Hardwick and Carol Gillespie. Oxford: OUP, 2007. Pp. 228-242.

Witt, Mary Ann Frese. *The Search for Modern Tragedy: Aesthetic Fascism in Italy and France*. Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 2001.

Wolf, Matt. "Antigone' review – Inua Ellams adapts Sophocles' Greek tragedy with high emotions" *London Theatre*. 29 September 2022. Last accessed 23 Dec 2022. <https://www.londontheatre.co.uk>

"World Premiere of X'ntigone Set for the MAC Stage". Press Release. 24 Jan 2022. Last accessed 29 June 2022. <https://themaclive.com/about-us/news/world-premiere-of-xntigone>

Worth, Katharine. "Greek Notes in Samuel Beckett's Theatre Art" in *Dionysus Since 69: Greek Tragedy at the Dawn of the Third Millenium*. Edited by Edith Hall et al. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

"*X'ntigone* Review". Blog entry. *No More Workhouse*. 18 March 2022. Last accessed 29 May 2023. <https://nomoreworkhorse.com/2022/03/18/xntigone-after-sophocles-abbey-theatre-peacock-review/>

Yaqin, Amina. "Necropolitical Trauma in Kamila Shamsie's Fiction", *The Muslim World*, 111:2 (2021). pp. 234-249.

Yeats, William Butler. *The Collected Works in Verse and Prose of William Butler Yeats*, Vol. 4 (of 8) *The Hourglass. Cathleen Ni Houlihan. The Golden Helmet.* The Irish Dramatic Movement. Project Gutenberg, 2015. Web.

"You are either with us or against us" CNN.com on 6 Nov. 2001. <https://edition.cnn.com/2001/US/11/06/gen.attack.on.terror/>.

Younger, Kelly. "Irish Antigones: Burying the Colonial Symptom". *Colloquy: Text, Theory and Critique*. 11 (2006). pp. 148-162.

Zajko, Vanda and Miriam Leonard, eds. *Laughing with Medusa: Classical Myth and Feminist Thought*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006.

Zeitlin, Froma I. "Thebes: Theatre of Self and Society in Athenian Drama", in *Nothing to do with Dionysos? Athenian Drama in its Social Context*. Eds. John J. Winkler and Froma I. Zeitlin. New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1990. pp. 130-167.

Zenderlioglu, Berfin. *Antigone2012*. Unpublished play text, 2012.

---. Personal Interview. 22 September 2020.

Žižek, Slavoj. *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992.

---. *The sublime object of ideology*. London & New York: Verso, 2008.