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How to Cite: Cavanagh, S L 2017 Antigone's Legacy: A Feminist psychoanalytic of an Other Sexual Difference. *Studies in the Maternal*, 9(1): 4, pp. 1–33, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.16995/sim.223>

Published: 01 August 2017

Peer Review:

This article has been peer reviewed through the double-blind process of *Studies in the Maternal*, which is a journal published by the *Open Library of Humanities*.

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ARTICLE

Antigone's Legacy: A Feminist psychoanalytic of an Other Sexual Difference

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Much has been written about Antigone who buried her brother Polynices in Theban soil despite the prohibition issued by King Creon (her uncle) in the Sophocles tragedy. In order to understand the magnitude of Antigone's radical act in the play by the same name I engage the scholarship of Israeli feminist psychoanalytic scholar Bracha L. Ettinger. By engaging Ettinger's theory of the Other (Feminine) Sexual Difference, I consider how ways of being in the Feminine tap into the matrixial domain, thus expanding the bounds of what counts as subjective experience in psychoanalysis. I situate Ettinger's theory of the matrixial in relation to Lacan's analysis of Antigone in *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis* (Seminar VII). I also focus on Julia Kristeva's concept of 'debinding' (2010) and Judith Butler's (2002) writing on gender and kinship disorder in the tragedy. My objective is to build upon Ettinger's analysis of Antigone to better understand how it is not death, exactly, that is at stake in the drama, but rather the status of the Feminine dimension in the Theban city-state. If Antigone's transgression can be understood through a matrixial lens it behooves us as feminist scholars to more fully understand the affective landscape and maternal ethics of difference enacted in the play.

The tragedy of Antigone fascinates us when it raises questions of the place of the feminine beyond-the-phallus in the Other of culture. . . (Ettinger 2001a, p. 83).

Much has been written about Antigone who buried her brother Polynices in Theban soil despite the prohibition issued by King Creon (her uncle) in the Sophocles tragedy. In order to understand the magnitude of Antigone's radical act in the play by the same name, it is helpful to reflect upon what it means, in the contemporary context, to insist on the burial and dignity of a relative who is branded 'enemy of the state.' There is a conspicuous silence surrounding the pain of mothers and grieving kin when a child (or relative) has died while committing a heinous act of violence. Consider, for example, Sue Klebold, the mother of one of the two shooters at Columbine High School in 1999, who had her son's remains cremated because a "grave that doesn't exist can't offend" (Kaplan 2015). Or the way Omar Mateen's corpse was kept separate in the morgue from the 49 bodies he shot dead at the PULSE nightclub in Orlando, Florida. At the time of writing, Mateen's father wants his son buried in Orlando, stating in *International Business Times*: "He was born here so I'd like him to be buried [here]" (Wright 2016). Others do not want Mateen's body buried in American soil. I refer to these sensational cases not to make a democratic claim about burial practices (or even mourning rites), but to insist that we understand the complexities of affect and the politics of mourning unlawful kin at stake in Antigone's radical act.

Although feminists usually celebrate Antigone's defiance of the King as a courageous act of family love (and it is), let us not forget that Polynices led a savage attack against the city of Thebes ruled by his brother, Eteocles (who *was* given burial rites in Theban soil). It is no coincidence that the name Polynices is linked to the word 'discord' and to the phrase 'many wars.' If we are to follow the tragedy as told by Aeschylus in *Seven Against Thebes* (467 BC), the Theban army defeats the Argives led by Polynices but it is too late. Eteocles dares to meet his brother in battle and the two kill each other for what was, originally, their father's (Oedipus') throne. From the vantage point of the present, Eteocles would have been branded a terrorist. In the Aeschylus version of the play, the corpse of the two brothers are brought onto stage

and mourned together in the final act. But some 50 years later, Sophocles alters this ending in his *Antigone*. In the later play, the King explicitly forbids the city to bury or mourn Polynices (as enemy of the city) while Eteocles is given a hero's burial. If we are going to understand the affective dimension of Antigone's radical act as involving something about the maternal, let us remember that the act is not driven by a love born of a happy union unencumbered by incest, patricide and familial aggression.

Feminist scholars have labored over the question of Antigone and her insistence upon burying her brother Polynices in defiance of Creon, her King and uncle (Irigaray 1985; Copjec 2004; Sjöholm 2004; Butler 2000, 2006a; Honig 2009, 2010, 2011, 2013; Kristeva 2010; Söderback 2010). While some might dismiss her act as one of martyrdom, sacrificing her own life for the dignity of Polynices's corpse, feminist psychoanalytic theorists have tended to understand Antigone's transgression as not only fiercely independent and active, but as having conveyed something about Feminine ethics and difference. Luce Irigaray (1985; 1993) was perhaps, the first to persuasively argue that Antigone is an agent of the Feminine¹ defying the state, the King and the phallic order of the Law. She writes that Antigone conveys something about the power of blood, maternal desire and 'co-uterine attraction' (1985, p. 216). Celia Sjöholm (2004) argues that Antigone introduces a new paradigm of desire that is Feminine and irreducible to Oedipal-desire. Charles Segal (1999) demonstrates that Antigone's reverence is for homosplanchnous kinship ties, for those of the same womb (as opposed to those of the same paternal seed). Although each formulation of Antigone's desire differs, there is common ground with respect to her reverence to something of the Feminine dimension.

Feminist psychoanalytic theorists usually focus upon Antigone's ties to Polynices but overlook the critically important role of the m/other. Israeli feminist psychoanalytic theorist Bracha L. Ettinger's (2010) formulation of the 'Jocasta complex' on the other hand, is highly original and enables us to comprehend an Other (non-Oedipal) sexual difference evidenced in *Antigone*. Ettinger's (2011, 2010, 2001a, 2000b)

¹ I capitalize the 'F' in Feminine to underscore that I am using Ettinger's conception of the Feminine as opposed to feminine gender identity.

writing on the drama gives us a way to understand the protagonist's devotion to her brother *and* the centrally important role of Jocasta, as mother, in the tragedy. What ultimately matters to Ettinger is the rupture to the 'Jocaste-with-Antigone matrixial web' (2010, p. 1). That is to say, through a matrixial alliance Antigone carries a transitive trauma inherited from Jocasta that can only be put to rest by burying the family psychic crypt (Abraham and Torok 1994). Moreover, Ettinger reads Antigone's act as an inscription of the Feminine (Ettinger 2006) in the otherwise patriarchal landscape beholden to the King. Antigone channels the Feminine 'beyond-the-phallus in the Other of culture' (Ettinger 2001a, p. 83).

The Feminine is central to Ettinger's formulation of the Woman and the matrixial borderspace. It does not generate signifiers (word-images) in Lacanian terms. Rather, the Feminine operates through co-affecting and aesthetic fields. Building upon Lévinas, Ettinger explains that the Feminine is the "irreducible difference inside subjectivity: precisely what makes it human" (MB 190).

Despite the growing interest in Ettinger's scholarship, little work has been done on how her writing on the Feminine sits in relation to other feminist and psychoanalytic theories of Antigone. Certainly, Ettinger engages with Judith Butler and Jacques Lacan in her writings on Antigone, but not Julia Kristeva who has also written substantively on the drama. In this paper I contribute to the feminist psychoanalytic literature by situating Ettinger's writing on *Antigone* in relation to Lacan and Butler, as well as in relation to Julia Kristeva. The originality of Ettinger's (2006) conceptualization of the Feminine can be illustrated in comparison to these three theorists and their writings on the tragedy. My objectives are to (a) more fully highlight the specific contributions Ettinger makes through her analytic of the Feminine-matrixial through her discussion of Antigone; (b) to enable readers to situate her work in relation to Lacan, Butler and Kristeva; and (c) to highlight the unique contributions Ettinger makes to our understanding of maternal desire vis-à-vis the Jocasta Complex.

Bracha L. Ettinger and the Matrixial Borderspace

Bracha L. Ettinger began to publish her writings on the Feminine and the matrixial borderspace inspired by her art and psychoanalytic work with patients in the 1990s. Her scholarship on the matrixial offers a critical supplement to Lacan's writing on

Feminine sexuality. Ettinger contends that there is a discourse and an aesthetic particular to the Feminine that is submerged in Lacanian theorizing and in modernity more generally. She does not supplant Lacan's writing on sexuation but adds another, supplementary, dimension to it that she names the matrixial. Ettinger's theorization of the matrixial borderspace posits another Feminine sub-stratum operating alongside but irreducible to the phallic stratum. The matrixial borderspace does not make a phallic cut like the Lacanian signifier. There is no phallic equivalent to the matrixial. As Griselda Pollock writes, the 'matrix will not invert or replace, but *complement* and *shift* that which has been generated from the accords with the psycho-corpo-real imaginary of the masculine subject: what can be defined as phallogentric' (2006a, p. 86–87, italics in original).

The matrixial borderspace is a field of differentiation and co-emergence. The matrix "corresponds to a feminine dimension of the symbolic order dealing with asymmetrical, plural and fragmented subjects composed of the known as well as the not-rejected and not-assimilated unknown, and to unconscious processes of change and transgression at the borderlines, limits and thresholds of *I* and *non-I* emerging in co-existence" (Ettinger, 1992, 176, emphasis in original). Griselda Pollock notes that the matrixial is, for Ettinger, a signifier of "transformative transferential potentialities in a shareable resonance sphere" (Quoted in Ettinger, 2006, 21). The matrixial borderspace is an ever-changing space-event of cross-pollination whereby two or more partial-subjects encounter and co-affect each other in non-conscious ways. Any given borderline may become a threshold. What Ettinger calls the matrixial is in excess of the political body (its *bios*). The matrixial involves a co-affecting landscape and an ethics of an Other sexual difference evidenced in *Antigone*. Ettinger's theory gives us a way to account for transitive trauma, Feminine difference, ethics and what she calls matrixial borderlinkages in the family-web.

Ettinger uses the concept of the matrix to theorize 'early recognition of invisible difference' (1992, p. 193) between the subject and Others whom she also calls *non-I*'s. The matrix enables us to understand otherness *in* the subject. Moreover, the Other (as *non-I*) is a partner in difference. The matrix is moored by trace-memories of a shared body-space in the womb that is psychically invested. As Pollock explains,

'Matrix "thinks" pregnancy/pre-birth as structure (not a body or a place and never an organ – organ thinking is phallic)' (2013, p. 168).

Ettinger defines the matrix as an unconscious borderspace of simultaneous co-emergence and co-fading of the *I* and the uncognized *non-I*— or partial subjects, or unknown others linked to me— neither fused nor rejected, which produces, shares and transmits joint, hybrid and diffracted objects via conductible borderlinks. (2000b, p. 193)

The matrixial is, for Ettinger, a sub-stratum of difference where partial subjects borderlink to Others (as *non-I*s) without synchronicity or similitude. This borderlinking occurs in what Lacan calls the Real and involves partial-subjects (there are no individuals in the matrix) and what Ettinger calls an aggregated subjectivity (not reducible to intersubjectivity). The Ettingerian notion of borderlinking involves the co-poietic poles of *I* and *non-I*. Ettinger also speaks about the subject as encounter.²

The matrix is a sphere of difference and plurality that Ettinger calls Feminine, to be distinguished from gendered femininity and natal female corporeality.³ The Feminine should not be understood in an identitarian or demographic sense but rather, as a condition of becoming that recalls and is predicated on a relation to natal female sexual specificity in utero, and which is later coded (in the phallic) as Feminine. For Ettinger, the Feminine is a condition of co-existence open to everyone who can surrender to the 'several, to its own copoietic variation and return, intensely, artistically relived' (Massumi 2006, p. 31). It is a non-phallic and non-Oedipal trans-sensitivity available to everyone. The Feminine is the inter-human and thus, trans-individual. The Other (Feminine) sexual difference 'produces for men and women a

² Ettinger also speaks about the subject as several (more than One) and as 'partial.' The *I* and the *non-I* are names for the partial-subject and its Other. "The *I* is a pulsating pole of co-poiesis. The *I* and *non-I* are pulsating poles of co-poiesis along a shared psychic string" (2006, p. 193). Partial subjects are co-affecting assemblages in the matrixial borderspace.

³ Female corporeality is both a metaphor and un-cognized memory in Ettinger's theory of the matrixial. Ettinger is a post-Lacanian psychoanalytic theorist with a well-developed feminist critique of essentialism. Her theory should not be read as a psychoanalytic commentary on biology. Sex specific corporeality matters but it is not a given. Nor is it static. Sex is mediated by desire, aesthetics, fantasy and thus corpo-Real.

different, non-Oedipal sublimation where, in the search for *non-I(s)*, the *jouissance* is of the borderlinking itself' (2001b, p. 110). The matrixial borderlinking is an encounter-event in the Real at the basis of Feminine sexual difference. The Feminine is an 'irreducible difference *inside* subjectivity' (2007, p. 84).

The Ettingerian matrix is not a happy covenant but one laced by phantasy and trauma and, in Antigone's case, a legacy of what Kristeva calls 'uninterrupted similitude' based on incestuous and patricidal ties. Matrixial co-affecting relations, like phallic (object) relations, have their own separate slate of horrors dramatized by Antigone. The matrix is not characterized by parity, equanimity, or harmony in a democratic sense. For Ettinger, Feminine ethics are about knowing that life surpasses the individual subject. 'The potential is there [in the matrixial] for traumatic and destructive as well as ethical or aesthetic deposits of *jouissance*' (Ettinger 2006, p. 18).

The matrix is *jouissant* and laced with matrixial desire for borderlinking. Matrixial desire is not about amalgamation or aggressive incorporation but co-emergence in differentiation. 'Matrixial desire is an aspiration and an inspiration from a feminine *jouissance* toward the edges of a wider Symbolic' (Ettinger 2006, p. 113). The Feminine operates by/through borderlinking. 'Assemblages composed of unknown I(s) and *non-I(s)* are. . . points of support for matrixial desire and knowledge' (Ettinger 2000a, p. 63). It should be remembered that matrixial desire is not harmonious or utopic: it can be terrifying and traumatizing as Antigone discovers. Ettinger writes that the 'desire to join-in-difference and differentiate-in-co-emergence with the Other [. . . involves] a joining with-in the other's trauma that echoes back to my archaic traumas' (2006, p. 147). Sharing by joining in difference and differentiating in co-emergence is profoundly unsettling insofar as it threatens us with mental disintegration and memory of oblivion. We are not, as Ettinger notes, 'cut from lack', we 'appear by disappearing' (p. 147). Matrixial desire is, for Ettinger, a non-sexual Feminine Eros that is *sexuating*. More specifically, it is an Eros that resonates in an Other axis of sexual difference.

Read through the lens of the matrixial, Antigone's radical act is not driven by a desire for severance or death, but for borderlinking to/with/in her m/Other. In

Ettingerian terms, Antigone dramatizes a co-affective tie linking partial-subjects (Antigone to Polynices and Antigone to Jocasta, all partners in difference) in the matrixial web. Antigone knows that matrixial linkages must not be annihilated by the Other's tyrannical jouissance (symbolized by Creon). Polynices must be seen to have existed through the enactment of a state-sanctioned burial. His *being* as Other is bound up with multiple Others (as partial-subjects) in the House of Oedipus. Ettinger contends that Antigone would rather end her own life than bear a cut in her matrixial web represented by her brother's unburied corpse. She persuasively argues that Antigone transgresses the law of the King in order to preserve her maternal link to Jocasta (as mother).

Jacques Lacan and Antigone

Lacan reads *Antigone* as a tragedy of special significance. Speaking of Creon, Lacan writes:

His refusal to allow a sepulcher for Polynices, who is an enemy and a traitor to his country, is founded on the fact that one cannot at the same time honor those who have defended their country and those who have attacked it (1992, p. 259).

But for Lacan, Antigone's transgression is not a bad in opposition to the King's good. It is a response to something that exceeds the good. Antigone's desire is, for Lacan, mistaken for the good. This is not to say that Antigone is evil. It is to say that there is a surplus to the good that drives Antigone to act. 'The good cannot reign over all without an excess emerging whose fatal consequences are revealed to us in tragedy' (1992, p. 259). In other words, King Creon, as agent of the good, went too far. His error, as understood by Lacan, is to 'want to promote the good of all [. . .] as the law without limits, the sovereign law, the law that goes beyond or crosses the limit' (1992, p. 259). Lacan explains that the tragedy could have been avoided 'if the social body had been willing to pardon, to forget and cover over everything with the same funeral rites [given to Eteocles]' (1992, p. 283).

Antigone's defiance addresses the surplus that is the King's 'good.' Lacan thus calls Antigone the 'real hero' (p. 258) of the play. More significantly, he finds in

Antigone's courageous act, an ethic for psychoanalysis. But this ethic should not be confused with saintliness or martyrdom. Antigone's act is not about burial rights, nor kinship, nor country, nor even the law for Lacan. Antigone's act is about the function of the beautiful, which is, for the Parisian psychoanalyst, about the function of desire. Lacanian 'beauty' is not an aesthetic ideal. It is a negativity that radiates and resides at the limit. Antigone's beauty is an 'intermediary between two fields that are symbolically differentiated' (1992, p. 248). These two fields are life and death. Beauty thus reveals a void structuring desire. Like an empty vase, beauty gives contour to the void. Lacan evokes the empty center and, more precisely, the curvature of a vase to capture the essence of the void in and around which desire circles. Beauty is best understood as a 'pulsion, an insistence and a repetition behind which or beyond which there is only a void' (Freeland 2013, p. 150). In Lacan's words, Antigone reveals 'to us the line of sight that defines desire' (1992, p. 247). The heroine reveals something that has, for Lacan, never been articulated. Antigone reveals a transgressive jouissance. 'Antigone's drama thus presents in all its beauty and luminosity this dark core of non-appearing at the heart of the human situation' (Freeland 2013, p. 154).

Lacanian beauty is concerned with life and death and desire. Let us remember that Antigone chooses to honor Polynices's corpse knowing full well that she will lose her life and ultimately her cousin and fiancé Haemon (son of the Creon). In this way, she lives what Lacan calls a second death (a phrase he takes from Marquis de Sade's 1795, *Philosophy in the Bedroom*), which is a death in life. As such, Lacan positions Antigone between two deaths: she lives death in life and reveals an unrelenting death drive. She exists at an impossible limit. Charles Freeland (2013) explains that for Lacan, Antigone's beauty is to be found in the way she demarcates a 'limit where vocabularies are "exhausted," where the immeasurable other side of all vocabularies is approached and distanced' (2013, p. 152). When Lacan writes that Antigone is 'desire of death as such' (1992, p. 282) he doesn't mean that she is suicidal. He means that she is pure desire (above and beyond the Law). What interests Lacan is the way a 'human being is defined by desire's insatiable *pulsion* toward what it cannot attain' (Freeman 2013, p. 164). Antigone is striking because she reveals the presence of our

own death-bound desire and in a blinding fashion. This is the image that Lacan calls the splendor of Antigone. Lacan tells us that the 'phenomenon of the beautiful. . . [is] the limit of the second death' (1992, p. 260).

Death certainly looms large in the tragedy. Antigone says, 'I gave myself to death, long ago, so I might serve the dead' (Sophocles 1984, p. 88). Creon also says that Antigone worships death. While Polynices is dead yet unburied, Antigone is ear-marked to die alive by the King. Lacan wonders about the 'fate of a life that is about to turn into certain death, a death lived by anticipation, a death that crosses over into the sphere of life, a life that moves into the realm of death' (1992, p. 248). Antigone's mother takes her own life (after learning the truth of her sinful marriage), her brothers take each other's lives in battle over their father's legacy and kingdom, Haemon dies by a sword meant for his father (the King) and Antigone disowns her sister, Ismene, for refusing to join her in giving their maligned brother burial rites.⁴

Lacan is less concerned about Antigone's actual death than the Symbolic death she negotiates in life. Antigone says: 'I have no home on earth and none below, not with the living, not with the breathless dead' (Sophocles 1984, p. 103). To her diseased brother Oedipus, she says, 'your marriage murders mine, your dying drags me down to death alive' (p. 103). As Lacan notes, Antigone enters the non-space of the second death. She lives while knowing she is condemned literally and symbolically. But let us remember that Antigone's symbolic position at the limit is not chosen. Her *being* between life and death is the result of an incestuous and patricidal legacy dating back to Oedipus. From birth, Antigone is outside and beyond patriarchal law. Her existence as a legal subject is tenuous at best. In Lacan's estimate, Antigone's desire is not to die, but to lend symbolic support to the position of brother. She seeks to strengthen the Symbolic position of her kin. This is what Lacan means when he says that Antigone loves the 'pure being' of her brother.

⁴ Bonnie Honig (2011) argues that the first unlawful burial of Polynices may have been done by Ismene, not Antigone. If this is true, Antigone does not really disown her sister but acts in her defense by assuming responsibility for both burials.

Lacan suggests that the desire for recognition sought by Antigone is not really a question of legal recognition of the person Polynices. It is desire for symbolic recognition of his position *as* brother. Because there is more than one character that occupies the position of brother and, also because Oedipus (as father) is also brother, there is a lack of symbolic differentiation. What Antigone wants, from Lacan's perspective, is authorization for her brother's very being which will, metonymically, help inscribe her own being as a subject in the Symbolic. In so doing, Antigone is the 'guardian of the being of the criminal as such' (1992, p. 283). No one else in her family is left to 'assume the [crime that is Jocasta's desire] and the validity of the crime apart from Antigone' (1992, p. 283). Lacan is not making a moral claim here. He is underlying Antigone's function in the structure. What sets the protagonist apart from other mortals is that it is 'Not the mother-Thing but profane law [that] is unbearable for Antigone' (Saldanha 2012, p. 5).

The hallmark of a tragic hero is, for Lacan, their movement beyond the limit established by the structure. By crossing the limit, heroes are 'isolated' and 'exposed.' The limit is significant in Lacanian discourse because it is what one finds beyond the signifier. Lacan concedes that there is 'meaning at the limit, but there is nobody to signify it' (1993, p. 184–185). Unlike Ettinger, Lacan cannot conceive of a way to make meaning at the limit where the signifier does not reign. As Griselda Pollock (2003) writes in relation to the Ettingerian notion of beauty contra Lacan, it need not be blinding but rather a 'flash of intuned connectivity that is the condition for aesthetic affectivity' (p. 168).

Ettinger's notion of beauty supplements the original Lacanian formulation. For her, beauty is co-affective, metamorphic, and ethical. 'The beautiful is what succeeds – as object, subject, event, or transject – to offer and suggest re-affectation-as-redistribution of traumatic traces of encounter' (Ettinger 2010, p. 14). Antigone does not only reveal a radiant-splendor bound-up in death (as theorized by Lacan), but the partial-subject's relation to the m/Other. This latter relation is, for Ettinger, repressed in the phallic stratum. It needs to be articulated through art and through what she calls 'care-full com-passion and faith-full wit(h)nessing – through *communi-*

caring' (2010, p. 14). What has to be wit(h)nessed – and what radiates with beauty – is the originary Feminine rapport that is, for Ettinger, foundational to life, ethics and aesthetics.

For Ettinger, beauty occurs in the matrixial borderspace. She writes: 'The human body with-in this borderspace is not the last barrier from the Other-beyond, but the *passage to an other*' (2010, p. 12). She agrees with Lacan that Antigone manifests the death drive and ultimately the desire of the m/Other, but believes that in his reading of the play, he folds the 'womb into the phallus/castration stratum' (2010, p. 13). She contends that Lacan reduces Polynices to an "unexchangeable One" (p. 13) which is only true in the phallic stratum. 'The matrixial prism conveys a different interpretation to Antigone's referring to the womb, and a supplementary value to the figure of the brother' (p. 13). The transgression, for Ettinger, is an entry into a 'surplus beyond' (p. 13) where (and when) a metamorphic event-encounter reconfigures what counts (in the phallic prism) as a limit. The real issue for Ettinger involves not (only) the death of Polynices as 'one' brother, but also the death of the *non-I* in the *I*, which she elaborates in terms of the Jocaste-Antigone complex where trace-connections haunt Antigone. This complex involves the m/Other's desire that is, as Lacan would agree, foundational to the structure.

Lacan and Ettinger both agree that the m/Other is the Rosetta Stone. Indeed, Lacan writes in relation to the tragedy that the 'desire of the mother is the origin of everything. The desire for the mother is the founding desire of the whole structure' (1992, p. 283). Ettinger is interested in the traumatic traces bequeathed to Antigone by Jocasta and their dispersal through her radical act. 'What is at stake here is the *psychic site* of the trauma of the other with-in myself reached by force of the brother's alliance with the *I*' (Ettinger 2010, p. 13). Likewise, Lacan contends that Antigone's act is linked to her brother Polynices but he does not view the linkage as significant to a matrixial nexus involving the mother. Lacan writes: 'The Greek term that expresses the joining of oneself to a brother or sister recurs throughout the play, and it appears right away in the first line when Antigone is speaking to Ismene' (1992, p. 255).

In Ettinger's assessment, Antigone's desire is to register a matrixial tear and this registration, as Ettinger explains, is about beauty, thresholds (not limits) and futurity.

Beauty is, for Ettinger, about the irreplaceable. 'The effect of beauty results from the *rapport* of the subject to the horizon of life; from traversing to *the second death*' (Ettinger 2010, p. 11, emphasis in the original). Antigone lives at the limit where, as Ettinger writes, 'her life is already lost, where she is already on the other side' (p. 11). The Lacanian limit is not a barrier for Ettinger, but a threshold. As Ettinger writes, 'the limit-frontier described by Lacan that separates the subject from the death drive cuts the subject also from feminine sexuality; and constructs the "woman" as absent, and her "rapport" as "impossible", and herself as out-of-existence significance' (2000a, p. 92).

When we encounter a threshold, there is an encounter beyond the limit, which is beautiful and sublime: beautiful and sublime because it functions like a 'transport-station of trauma' (Ettinger 2000a, p. 92). Beyond the limit which, for Ettinger, is not absolute but more like a hybrid margin, is 'archaic trauma and jouissance, experienced in jointness-in-differentiating with the archaic-m/Other-to-be' (p. 95). There is, as Ettinger tells us, a trauma beyond the limit that is jouissant. The archaic jouissance is linked to the Woman-m/Other who is not only an absence (as Lacan would have it), but a pre-absence and a phantasmic presence. She is the space of an encounter-event in the matrixial web that is a borderlinking.

According to Lacan, Antigone's desire is an inhuman transgression of the limit and involves a metamorphosis. He writes:

The limit we have reached here is the one where the possibility of metamorphosis is located— metamorphosis that has come down through the centuries hidden in the works of Ovid and that regains its former vitality, its energy, during that turning point of European sensibility, the Renaissance, and bursts forth in the theater of Shakespeare. That is what Antigone is. (p. 265)

Lacan's metamorphosis involves the socio-Symbolic structure. The function of desire in drama is, he claims, to expose 'what remains undetermined: in the collapse of the house of cards represented by tragedy, one thing may subside before another, and what one finds at the end when one turns the whole thing around may appear in different ways' (1992, p. 265). In her Lacanian reading of *Antigone*, Joan Copjec (2004)

notes, for example, that the protagonist is not an intransigent character but a 'figure of radical metamorphosis' (p. 44). But for Ettinger, the change is not a 'meta' but '*metramorphosis*.' Metramorphosis is a:

Process of intra-psychical and inter-psychical or trans-individual exchange, transformation and affective "communication", between/with-in several matrixial entities. It is a passage-lane through which affected events, materials and modes of becoming infiltrate and diversify onto non-conscious margins of the Symbolic through/by sub-symbolic webs (2000b, p. 194).

In other words, metramorphosis reconfigures boundaries in a trans-subjective matrixial liaison. Limits become thresholds. Event-encounters occur in shifting border-spaces where new ties and affective links are formed (and transgressed). Metramorphosis 'draws a nonpsychotic yet *beyond-the-phallus* connection between the feminine and creation' (2006, p. 64). Antigone is co-affected by, and co-emerging with-in-by, her brother and mother (as *non-I*'s). While Lacan's metamorphosis concerns the Symbolic and what lies beyond the limit (where the untouchable *Thing* resides), Ettinger's metramorphosis is a transgression into what she calls the Feminine dimension. More specifically, metramorphosis is a swerve (not around a void as Lacan would have it) but into a Feminine dimension of difference that recalls female corpo-Reality in the womb.

Thus, female bodily specificity is the site, physically, imaginatively and symbolically, where a feminine difference emerges, where a "woman" is interlaced as a figure that is not confined to the one-body, but is the "webbing" of matrixial webs and metamorphic borderlinks between several subjects who by virtue of such a webbing become partial (Ettinger 2000b, p. 195).

Through her writing on Antigone, Ettinger contends that we can symbolize something beyond the Lacanian limit. Ettinger is deeply critical of how the Feminine fares in Lacan's writings. Ettinger's oeuvre is offered as a way to write the Woman from a matrixial perspective. Through her interpretation of *Antigone*, Ettinger contends that

the heroine is guided by a matrixial precept and precedent as opposed to a phallic legal-code. Ettinger's writing on Antigone enables us to better understand a modality of being that is not reducible to the phallic premise where the Woman does not exist in the economy of the universal One (at least not fully).

Julia Kristeva and Antigone

It is unfortunate that little comparative work exists on how Ettingerian scholarship sits in relation to Julia Kristeva's. Although Ettinger's formulation of the matrixial and Kristeva's formulation of the semiotic differ, both offer a critical feminist psychoanalytic response to Lacan's writing on feminine sexuality. There are, however, significant differences in their approach to the maternal, which become evident in their writings on *Antigone*.

Ettinger distinguishes her work on the matrixial from Julia Kristeva's writing on the Chora, which also means womb and uterus. Although both the Chora and the Matrix are anchored to maternal encounters, the Chora cannot be symbolized in Kristeva's theory and is relegated to psychotic discourse or to poetic discourse. Ettinger's concern with Kristeva's conceptualization of the Chora is that it reduces pregnancy to psychosis. As she says, for Kristeva 'giving birth must emerge as psychosis in culture' (Ettinger 2000b, p. 204). For Ettinger this is only true from a phallic perspective because it is in this axis that the subject-as-several (transjectivity) is reduced to psychosis. The matrix, as theorized by Ettinger, can be symbolized in an expanded Symbolic, in a Feminine sub-stratum. The Feminine matrixial sub-stratum is the other of Oedipal, phallic sexual difference.⁵

It must also be stressed that Kristeva's writing on the Chora focuses on the post-natal while Ettinger's work on the matrix focuses on the pre-natal. 'The Matrix deals with symbols in relation to prenatal strata of subjectivity, partial objects, differences which do not imply opposition, a-symmetry, more-than-one but not

⁵ In the matrixial substratum Woman 'digs an-other area of difference with its specific apparatus, processes, and functions' (Ettinger 1997, p. 367). Woman is a condition of heterogeneous co-emergence in a matrixial relation between partial subjects in a shared web. It is not gender dependent. The Woman can thus be a father and son relation (Ettinger 2006).

everything, less-than-one but not nothing' (Ettinger 1992, p. 16). Ettinger is, however, in agreement with the way Kristeva understands the signifying aspects of psychic energy. Specifically, the way the body pulsates and trans-connects through corporeal rhythms. Kristeva describes the semiotic as having its genesis in the 'precocious mother-baby bond, [that] marks the psychosexuality of the woman with a primary, endogenous homosexuality that is "unwritten" because it is prelinguistic, sensorial, quasi-indivisible' (2010, p. 226).

Kristeva's writing on revolt (2003), melancholia (1989) and abjection (1982) posits a subject who can be split or separated from the m/Other. Ettinger's approach to the maternal is shaped by an Other axis of difference whereby the maternal dyad cannot be severed in a phallic sense. Kristeva's Symbolic adheres, in part, to Lacan's theory of Symbolic castration. Ettinger's model posits another, expanded sub-symbolic where matrixial ties persist. While Ettinger is concerned with symbolizing matrixial ties (to Polynices, for example), Kristeva is concerned with Antigone's inability to separate from a suffocating familial web. In this cloistering web, differences between kinship positions are compromised due to Oedipus' formative transgressions (patricide and incest). In Kristeva's view, Antigone struggles to become a subject in her own right. She insightfully argues that the drama is about the 'uninterrupted *sameness* circulating in Antigone's bloodline' (Kristeva 2010, p. 218, emphasis mine). Kristeva elaborates upon the complexity of *being* for Antigone in the incestuous bloodline:

On this side, Antigone makes herself exactly equivalent to the brother Polynices, who in turn is equivalent to his father Oedipus (both being sons of Jocasta); but also to *man* in his *virility* because in seeing her reflection in the mirror that Polynices holds up to her, she catches a glimpse of that masculine trait for which her uncle Creon will reproach her, a brother himself, but to the mother of Antigone: the brother of Jocasta (p. 219, emphasis in original).

Antigone claims that her brother is 'of my blood from father and mother.' There is no space for identity and difference, only annihilating similitude. She lives in the shadow

of Oedipal-transgressions. Antigone is *born* beyond the limit and her transgression is, for Kristeva, ultimately reparative. Kristeva interprets Antigone's radical act as one of de-binding. Kristeva explains that Antigone 'uncovers a placid energy that cuts the bonds and effects a de-binding [*déliation*] that annuls identities and differences in order to install the subject, beyond loss, depression, and suffering, in the pathos of *dispassionating*' (2010, p. 218). In other words, Antigone escapes what Kristeva calls the neurosis of the human condition. The de-binding is, for Kristeva, reparative because it enacts a difference in the place of similitude where one kinship position slides into another without scansion.

Antigone makes a cut that paradoxically 'regenerates the social bond [. . . by] going outside of the self – the limit state of an indivisible identity' (Kristeva 2010, p. 218). For Kristeva, Antigone does not need to establish a linkage with her brother but rather a cut. For her, Antigone's radical act reconfigures and ultimately establishes an end to the incestuous bloodline. The protagonist's very name, as Kristeva points out, is Anti-gone (anti-engendering). Kristeva concludes that Antigone escapes hysteria and madness by enacting an Imaginary law of her own. In so doing, she arrives at the 'horizon of psychic sovereignty' (p. 223).

While Ettinger refuses the Lacanian metaphor of the 'cut' operative in Kristeva's theory of the semiotic, there is, in both formulas, a reconfiguration or change in the semiotic/matrixial link of relevance to the Feminine. Kristeva's theorization of abjection and the maternal-infant dyad has made enormous contributions to our understanding of the time-space transition from the semiotic to the symbolic, but Ettinger believes it is, ultimately, based on a phallic understanding of the maternal. Ettinger's critique of the Kristevian formulation of the maternal is that the child must fully separate from the mother who is associated with bodily (semiotic) interiority. Ettinger contends that Kristeva's theory of abjection consolidates inner and outer worlds, purity and defilement, which in the matrixial, are inseparable. The abject becomes alien and it then follows that the Other is 'rejected and repulsive' (Pollock 2006b, p. 109). Kristeva writes of an 'unbearable *dispassionating* of maternal care' (2010, p. 228). *Dispassionating*, in Kristeva's theory, involves a severing of ties,

a traversal of the mother's unwritten 'endogenous homosexuality that is primary, 'prelinguistic, sensorial, [and] quasi-individual' (Kristeva 2010, p. 226). Solitude and 'de-binding' are key. For Ettinger (1997), this is a phallic conceptualization based on castrating splits as opposed to a trans-subjective weave.

While Ettinger posits an aggregated subjectivity (severality), Kristeva writes about subject and object relations (self and Other). In Ettinger's framework it is possible to theorize partial-subjects in a trans-subjective space of difference. Kristeva is inclined to worry about fusion and symbiosis in the mother-child dyad while Ettinger conceives of a co-affecting relation that is subjectifying. Ettinger contends that in an expanded Symbolic maternal encounter-events between subject-to-be and mother-to-be *can* be apprehended and symbolized. She refers to pregnancy as a 'negated third possibility – an unspeakable, or should we say, evacuated possibility' (Ettinger 2004, p. 69) in the phallic stratum, but one that can be apprehended in the matrixial.

Like Ettinger, Kristeva (1982) cares about how the Woman is understood in the phallic frame. As she writes in her discussion of *Antigone*, the 'woman is an eternal stranger to the political community, inexorably exiled from the initial osmosis with her generative source [*génitrice*]' (Kristeva 2010, p. 226). Antigone, as representative of the Feminine, is fecund and does not need the phallus, she is above it in Kristeva's formulation. Moreover, the archaic mother (to be distinguished from the 'pre-Oedipal' suffocating mother conceived by Freud) is not defined by her lack. Her lack does not give presence to the male child or natal male-husband. She is the sole originator: subject not object. '*Jocasta, the mother, is the only one* who persists in her own identity because she is the mother, is the mother of everyone, including Oedipus' (Kristeva 2010, p. 219, emphasis in original).

What Kristeva calls an 'uninterrupted sameness' in the familial bloodline is nullifying for Antigone and ensures an 'incestuous brotherhood that cannot manifest its autonomy in similarity save by spilling shared blood in a war among brothers' (p. 219). In my view, Kristeva is correct to call the legacy of Oedipus strangulating. Her discussion of the 'cut' may function like an Ettingerian borderlinkage. The borderspace of concern to Ettinger involves, by her own account, 'fading' and

'differentiation' alongside 'appearing' and co-affective 'becomings.' My suggestion is that Antigone forges a debinding (in a Kristevian sense) that is also a metamorphic reconfiguration of trace-connections in an Ettingerian sense. Ettinger would call this a transcription of a maternal trace that was, for Antigone, betrothed as a psychic crypt (Abraham and Torok 1994). Kristeva does not see a psychic crypt as Ettinger does, but an elaborate trap of sameness leading to multiple deaths. The specter of death ricochets through the family line. One suicide becomes a metonym for another death. Kristeva elaborates:

Worse, suicidal, because to kill a single body of the same blood in the consanguineous labyrinth of equivalences, equivalent ricochets and reflections, is – for this family here – to kill [à *suicide*] its “sameness” [*mêmeté*], to kill itself: the death of and in the family are the suicide of the family (2010, p. 220).

But Antigone's act (of unlawful burial) is not to be read (only) as suicidal. Kristeva's formulation is, to some extent, aligned with Lacan's writing on the second death.⁶ Antigone's radical act, read from a Lacanian perspective, is designed to preserve her 'essential being which is the family *Até*' (Lacan 1992, p. 283). Antigone risks madness in the creation of what Kristeva calls an 'imaginary universe' (2010, p. 222). This, for Kristeva, involves psychical brother-love in the absence of an operative incest taboo. Kristeva refers to the sibling-love as a 'postmortem wedding night' (2010, p. 216).

Ettinger's writing on incest enables us to understand Antigone's 'brother-love' in another light. Ettinger narrates two forms of incest. *Antigone* dramatizes the difference between the two. The first is primary and unavoidable and generative. It occurs in the womb. It links the mother-to-be and the subject-to-be in a 'shared matrixial Real[. . .]pre-subjectivity is saturated by transjective resonance, [where] trans-

⁶ Notably, Kristeva refers to 'death's permanent cohabitation in the temporality of the living' (2010, p. 225). Moreover, she refers to Antigone's desire to rejoin Polynices in a death she calls, along with Lacan, "beyond the *Até*" (2010, p. 225).

generational transmission[...]occurs by co-emerging with the archaic m/Other' (2010, p. 5). *Becoming* is ultimately linked to an incestuous transgression in the-mother-to-be. Life depends upon it. This matrixial incest cannot be outlawed although it is subject to repression. As such, it lacks cultural value in the phallic stratum. By burying Polynices, Antigone is also burying her mother. The heroine is grieving the unsymbolized dimensions of the maternal connection which are incestuous and traumatic.⁷

The second kind of incest is phallic, Oedipal, and destructive (not subjectivizing). It is linked to what Freud calls the 'Oedipus Complex'. It is subject to cultural taboo and legal prohibition. Antigone is heir to both maternal and phallic incestuous transgressions. But this is not all: Ettinger claims that the protagonist has also inherited a psychic crypt. 'Antigone is also heir to an encrypted maternal enigma she cannot access without sharing with a *non-I*. She carries traces of this enigma" (2010, p. 5). It follows that Antigone is tormented not only by the Oedipal transgression, but by Jocasta's transgression which effectively combines the two forms of incest. Jocasta abandons Oedipus and in so doing colludes in 'paternal infanticide impulses' (p. 6) even as she tries to save her son from Laius by abandoning him to a shepherd as a baby. But by a second, 'supplementary abandonment, she disappeared to her daughters' (p. 6) by suicide. The mother's transgressions become psychic traces passed down to Antigone. Jocasta and Antigone's psychical struggles are inter-implicated and co-affecting. There is, in Antigone's life story, a foundational matrixial tear that Ettinger reads in terms of the 'Jocasta Complex'. For Ettinger, Antigone's link to her mother is primary (Oedipalization is secondary). She writes:

[for] Jocaste-with-Antigone: a yearning beating searches for the resonance emanating from the struggle for meaning-creation over a transcripted

⁷ Like Ettinger, Butler is also suspicious of the claim that Antigone is only grieving her brother Polynices. Referring to Antigone's speech about the loss of her brother in his singularity, Butler writes: '[. . .] her insistence on the singularity of her brother, his radical irreproducibility, is belied by the mourning she fails to perform for her two other brothers [Oedipus and Eteocles], the ones she fails to reproduce publicly for us' (2002, p. 80).

bleeding, a lamenting womb – as time-space of sharing of m/Other with brothers – where fascinace and compassion resonate in com-compassion beyond different times and places (2010, p. 11).

Ettinger views Antigone's radical defiance of the King as driven by a primal need to respect the integrity of the matrixial web and to do justice to the no-longer present presence of the mother Jocasta, who, like Antigone, takes her own life. Antigone is '*suffering from the tearing away into total separateness of her principal partner-in-difference, until this moment separated-in-jointness*' (Ettinger 2000b, p. 205, emphasis in original).

The King's denial of burial rites to Polynices is not only painful because it condemns her brother (and nephew) to the underworld, but it disrespects her mother Jocasta as parent and ancestor. It is not death that drives a knife in the matrixial web but the 'passage to bestiality that threatens to blow up and explode this sphere altogether into separate pieces' (Ettinger 2000b, p. 205). By denying Polynices burial rites, Antigone's sibling/nephew is reduced to the level of the non-human animal and Jocasta, as mother, (along with her father and brother, Oedipus) the progenitor(s) of a monstrosity.

The drama allows us to see how the Feminine co-affecting relation that Ettinger calls matrixial is political. Antigone goes beyond the phallic-limit which, as Ettinger tells us, is a threshold leading to an-Other (matrixial) borderspace in time. The matrix lacks legitimate status in the contemporary neo-liberal state and is relegated to nonsense (or psychosis) in humanist and democratic rights-based discourse. Kristeva agrees that Antigone represents a Feminine dimension but that it is, given the incestuous family-line, more inevitably caught up with death or, at least, similitude without difference. Antigone, like all members of her family except Jocasta (who is, unequivocally, mother) lacks a coherent familial identity/kinship position. As such, Kristeva's Antigone cannot be subject to political justice; she is beyond human norms as Ettinger agrees. It is almost inevitable that Antigone must approach madness. But as Kristeva observes, Antigone approaches a life-limit with incredible resolve, reaching a state of psychic sovereignty (2010, p. 223). Reading the two theorists

together, we might conclude that Antigone's act reconfigures the incestuous phantom-like trace that left alone leaves the jouissant transgressions of the Mother (Jocasta) and Father (Oedipus) unbarred.

Judith Butler and Antigone

In *Antigone's Claim*, Judith Butler demonstrates how Antigone's refusal to abide by the orders of the King, as representative of the state, is not only an instance of feminist rebellion but a commentary on her no-place in kinship structures and by extension the polis. This 'no-place' is dramatized through gender and kinship disorder. Due to Oedipus's formative incestuous transgression, Antigone occupies a range of un-authorized familial positions: she is daughter and sister to her father/brother (Oedipus), sister and aunt to her nephew/brother (Polynices), and daughter and granddaughter to her mother/grandmother (Jocasta). Butler's ultimate point in tracing gender disorder throughout the play is that Antigone's radical act delivers a fatal blow to heterosexuality supported as it is by normative gender and kinship positions. But as Butler demonstrates so insightfully, the norms of gender and kinship positioning are intimately related to their violation. She writes: 'Antigone represents neither kinship nor its radical outside but becomes the occasion for a reading of a structurally constrained notion of kinship in terms of its social iterability, the aberrant temporality of the norm' (Butler 2002, p. 29).

Butler astutely observes that Antigone's capacity to represent herself, as singular subject, is in crisis. What interests Butler is, in part, the "political possibility that emerges when the limits to representation and representability are exposed" (2002, p. 2). One of Butler's central claims is that normative kinship structures enable the political sphere, even as they are also formally excluded by it. She also claims that Antigone's familial line is not intelligible and becomes a kind of allegory for gender disorder. Referring to Antigone, Butler writes, 'she opposes sovereign power and is excluded from its terms' (2002, p. 28). A key question guiding Butler's analysis is how Antigone is officially precluded from the polis as a rights-bearing citizen but speaks and acts in any case.

There is, as Butler writes, a way in which Antigone's proclamations to love her brother 'exceed the temporality of the enunciation' (2002, p. 60). Moreover, she contends that every deed in the tragedy is the:

[...] apparent temporal effect of some prior word, instituting the temporality of a tragic belatedness, that all that happens has already happened, will come to appear as the always already happening, a word or deed entangled and extended through time through the force of repetition (Butler 2000, p. 64).

Butler's concern here is with a dangerous Oedipal repetition; a repetition requiring Antigone's love to be for a dead-man (Polynices in place of Oedipus). The repetition places the protagonist in 'perpetual exile into non-being that marks its distance from any sense of home' (Butler 2002, p. 64).

Butler agrees, in part, with Lacan: Antigone and the King are not oppositional figures – despite their steadfast opposition to one another – as Hegel claims; they are 'chiasmically related' (2002, p. 6). Creon represents the state while Antigone represents kinship structures, both of which are mutually constitutive and interdependent. As Butler notes Antigone's speech-acts are made in the idiom of the other (the King); and they also, rhetorically, confound the difference between the King (as guardian of the Law) and the daughter-sister who is not supposed to speak as a legal subject. Antigone's radical act cannot be understood from the position of the Law governing the individual as unitary actor. She is outside the legal frame, but paradoxically operates within its jurisdiction.

Ettinger's perspective adds to Butler's by suggesting that not only Antigone, but the Feminine itself, is irreducible to the pure space of polis (as phallic domain). Read from the perspective of the matrixial, new insight can be taken from Butler's important text. We can see, for example, how gender and heteronormative disorder in kinship structures can be tragic, in part, because it thrusts the characters into what we might call a state of Feminine exception.⁸ Giorgio Agamben (1998), for instance,

⁸ It is worth noting that William Robert (2009) shows how Antigone undercuts Giorgio Agamben's notion of the *homo sacer*, she is both a paradigm example of, and enigma to, the idea of the sacred man reduced to bare life.

writes about how vast swaths of the international community live without basic citizenship rights. They are living in a zone whereby their 'ontological status as legal subjects is suspended' (Butler 2002, p. 81). Butler also refers to Hannah Arendt's discussion of the 'shadowy realm' (p. 81) where certain subjects are precluded from the domain of the human. It is striking how closely Butler's discourse touches upon this Other Feminine axis of difference excavated by Ettinger (2006). For example, in her critique of Hegel, Butler notices that he attributes the 'unwritten law of the ancient gods' (2002, p. 38) to Antigone; a law without origin appearing as a trace without form, and defying written language. She even calls this an 'other law' (Butler 2000, p. 38) in Hegelian terms that undoes the literalism of the drama. Butler asks if what Hegel apprehends as the 'enigma of another possible order' in *Antigone* is the 'unconscious of the law' (2002, p. 39). Her immediate political concern is with respect to the question of whether or not this 'unwritten law' (p. 39) can alter the existing public law of the patriarchal Father. Is there, in other words, an incommensurable difference between Antigone's law and Creon's law or are they mutually constitutive?

I think Butler comes close to articulating the Feminine maxim when she writes that the unconscious law 'leaves only an incommunicable trace, an enigma of another possible order' (2002, p. 39). In her discussion of Hegel and Lacan, Butler notes that Antigone seems to stand for a 'feminine domain' (p. 29) but does not fully describe what this feminine domain entails. In fairness to Butler (2006b), it must be acknowledged that she cautions Ettinger about reducing all forms of difference and non-identity to the Feminine (Ettinger, 2006). It is not that Butler has not yet grasped what Ettinger calls the Feminine. Rather, Butler does not use the term because it will (almost) inevitably be understood within a sex/gender binary that permeates heteropatriarchal culture. Butler explains that Antigone figures as the law's unconscious and as such, remains opaque to it. As Butler concludes, to insist upon the 'legality of what does not exist and of what is unconscious [. . .] some form of demand that the unconscious necessarily makes on law, that which marks the limit and condition of law's generalizability' (2002, p. 33) is, ultimately, what Antigone does. The

enigmatic order to which Antigone is beholden is, from Ettinger's perspective, an Other (Feminine) axis of difference involving partial-subjects in excess of the state's nomenclature.

According to Butler, Antigone demands recognition for those living beyond existing gender and kinship structures. She contends that by leaving Polynices's corpse to the elements and wild beasts the King is refusing symbolic burial to all three subjects. Butler wonders if the three subjects 'condensed at the exposed body of Polynices, an exposure she [Antigone] seeks to cover, a nakedness she would rather not see or have seen' (p. 79) is what drives her transgression. For Ettinger on the other hand, Antigone is driven by a Feminine wish to recognize Others as partial-subjects (*non-I's*). Ettinger claims that matrixial desire fuels a wish to close a gap between generations which is, ideally, sublimated into a Feminine ethic of com-passion. This com-passion is trans-sensitive insofar as it apprehends Others and *non-I's* in the matrixial web. Her position as partial-subject is transconnected to Polynices and Jocasta and it is from this borderspace that she speaks. Put in yet another way, Antigone stands for a Feminine ethic whereby *I* is an Other. There is, as Butler correctly concludes, a 'sacrifice of autonomy' in Antigone's speech-acts. However, from the perspective of the matrixial there is, in legal jurisprudence, a sacrifice of the subject's trace connections to Others (as *non-I's*) if one acts autonomously.

Butler acknowledges that legal citizenship 'demands a partial repudiation of the kinship relations that bring the male citizen into being' (2002, p. 12). She also underscores the heteropatriarchal masculinity of the state and legal-jurisprudence. Butler makes the normative kinship structure underlying Lacanian theory visible in her discussion of Antigone. Her interest is in how the Lacanian distinction between the symbolic position and a social norm does not hold up. This enables her to argue that Lacanian theory is structuralist and based on patriarchal kinship ties. Her ultimate point is that the Lacanian distinction between the Symbolic (enabled by a structuring order of language) and the social (as historical and contingent) is insupportable.

While Butler asks important questions about what network of gender and kinship relations might make life on the margins of cultural intelligibility representable (and thus livable), Ettinger asks a comparable set of questions about the status of the Feminine in the phallic stratum. Butler wants to historicize Lacan in a Foucauldian way, while Ettinger wants to add an Other supplementary dimension to the phallic Symbolic theorized by Lacan. Ettinger's concern is with what becomes of the matrixial elements of the subject in a phallic order predicated upon a denial of the Feminine. Ettinger's oeuvre invites us to consider that it is not only the repudiation of non-normative kinship ties that are at stake in the tragedy, but (also) our intimate ties to others no longer living, but nevertheless present in a matrixial sense. Partial-subjective ties to Others (as *non-I*s) in the matrixial web also lack intelligibility. In other words, the very public Oedipal transgression exposes not only a limit to what the Symbolic can ratify by way of kinship positions but, also, something of the matrixial that is, in the absence of such visible transgressions, unacknowledged in politics and phallic culture.

If Ettinger's Feminine dimension cannot be rendered intelligible through legal discourse maybe it is detected through a disordering of the kinship ties that, as Butler correctly explains, condition the law as patriarchal-hetero-politic. Certainly, Butler suggests that kinship disorder may be an occasion for imagining a new field from which to understand and recognize the human. In Ettingerian terms, this new field must engage the Feminine dimension, a non-phallic axis of difference. This other matrixial dimension conditions and situates Antigone's radical act for the Israeli feminist scholar. Butler may even agree. She writes that in the tragedy there is a 'trace of an alternative legality that haunts the conscious, public sphere' (Butler 2002, p. 40). Butler also asks if Antigone might 'signify in a way that exceeds the reach of the symbolic' (2000, p. 44). Additionally, she refers to a conspicuous doubling throughout the play. 'Antigone's death is always double throughout the play: she claims that she has not lived, that she has not loved, and that she has not borne children, and so that she has been under the curse that Oedipus laid upon his children, "serving death" for the length of her life' (Butler 2002, p. 23). Butler's attention to the doubling

in/through death offers another way to read what Lacan calls the second death. It is not (only) a death in life that Antigone must negotiate but a 'kind of marriage to those in her family who are already dead, affirming the deathlike quality of those loves for which there is no viable and livable place in culture' (Butler 2002, p. 24). Butler productively uses this observation to make an important argument in support of political recognition and mourning rites for those lives rendered illegitimate, criminal and non-normative in western cultures.

But the 'doubling' in *Antigone* is not only about a manifest politic of recognition. It is also, read from a matrixial angle, about a desire to avow a Feminine dimension of desire that is eclipsed in/by the phallic ordering of kinship that reigns supreme. Ettinger asks us to consider how the subject-before-the-law does not act alone and is transconnected to Others (as *non-I's*) invisible to the naked (phallic) eye. In other words, there is a Feminine axis of difference that does not adhere to the nomenclature and taxonomy of state authorized subject positions. The matrixial exists, as Ettinger explains, before identity, gender and kinship structures become thinkable. The Feminine dimension is irreducible to legal jurisprudence and cannot be understood within its terms. Certainly, the King cannot comprehend Antigone's steadfast opposition to his Law. *Antigone*, the first play written in the Sophocles trilogy is, read from the vantage of the matrixial, about life in excess of the law and of the Symbolic. My suggestion is that what Butler calls the trace of an Other order, an 'alternative legality [that] haunts the conscious, public sphere as its scandalous future' (2002, p. 40) in the tragedy can be understood in terms of the Feminine-matrixial. This 'alternative legality' involves what Ettinger calls an ethics of the Feminine.

In her writing on the drama, Ettinger acknowledges the crucially important questions raised by Butler's reading, focused as it is on gender and kinship disorder (2010, p. 16). She writes: 'My perspective leads me to infuse this confusion with the Place of the m/Other and as *Sister-daughter*, and to consider the confusion of generations with the foreclosure of the m/Other, adding, thus, a matrixial Eros to Antigone's search for forms of love' (Ettinger 2010, p. 16). In other words, Ettinger adds another dimension to the Butlerian analysis of gender and kinship disorder that

involves questions about 'place' and 'time.' The 'place' of the m/Other and the 'time' of borderlinking in the matrixial are both relevant.

With an *Antigone as Place of the Brother qua Place of Loss* that does carry within it the *delphys*, the Place of the m/Other, even Oedipus is no longer so Oedipal; even Oedipus can function as a pole in a co-poietic string, and each son is *also* a Daughter in a matrixial sense (Ettinger 2010, p. 16).

Partial-subjects are all interconnected in a shared matrixial-borderspace. Thus, no character acts alone. In my view, what Butler rightly identifies as gender and kinship disorder does index this Other axis of difference theorized by Ettinger.

The lack of compassion for Antigone's plight is not only a phallic oversight, but a structural negation of the Feminine that is, as Ettinger points out, readily apparent in the modern-day denial of what she calls the 'Jocasta complex.' Ettinger contends that there is something in the position of mother (particularly involving natal girls), that warrants a psychoanalytic term in itself, a '*principal within countertransference*' (2006, p. 109, original emphasis), that she names the Jocasta complex. Ettinger is positing a theory of *besideness* as opposed to splitting. The besideness would involve a '*ratification of her [the mother's] acts without any need for identification with her or rationalization of her acts*' (p. 109, original emphasis). Without a name for the dilemma of the mother as subject and as ethical actor, such as, for example, the 'Jocasta Complex,' we damage the Real of the mother/daughter (mother/son) relationship: "the daughter blames the real mother for actual abandonment, and while languishing for perfect attunement with the Other and with the world, identifies with the turning of the womb into a tomb and engraving a psychic grave at the place of the originary string' (2010, p. 6).

For Ettinger, the foreclosure of what she calls the 'Jocasta Complex' is indicative of the extent to which psychoanalysis has ignored the significance of intrauterine experience. She contends that there are affective corpo-Real ties with-in/ between the becoming-subject and the mother-to-be that predate the signifier. These co-affective ties are relevant to the clinic, even if they are not accessible

by/through/in speech-acts. We are always more than One in the matrixial stratum. This is not to say that we do not exist as separate ethical subjects who must take responsibility for our acts. It is, rather, to say that we are always also aggregated and thus, acting with/alongside Others as partial-subjects. The Feminine dimension of being cannot remain in a state of exception and thus foreclosed. The Other in the *I* must be analyzed in a transjective sense to deal with shared trauma in the Feminine matrixial. We can no longer appeal to Oedipus and his interpersonal drama without attending to Antigone and Jocasta, as partners in difference, in the family romance and in culture at large. As Butler notes, Antigone's trauma is post-Oedipal (2002, p. 57). She is his descendant and as a descendent she is re-enacting a past drama that has been bequeathed to her by an Other but in a changed form.

Conclusion

Antigone is a compelling character because she makes what is absent – Polynices, the Feminine dimension, her unique familial web – signify something of importance. What Ettinger does in her writing on *Antigone* is to underscore the absolute significance of the mother Jocasta to the drama. Lacan recognizes the function of the m/Other but aligns the Feminine with a death-like limit that cannot be surpassed. Kristeva's oeuvre also recognizes the importance of the maternal and the semi-otic but reduces birth (and pregnancy) to fusion, symbiosis and psychosis. Butler's work on *Antigone*, with which Ettinger engages directly, needs to be supplemented with attention to the 'Place of Generation' (2010, p. 16), and to our relations to m/Others in matrixial webs. Ettinger enables us to understand how Antigone's radical act is a transgression with-in-to the Feminine involving Jocasta as mother. This turning into the Feminine dimension involves borderlinking to Others (not just Oedipus). *Antigone* dramatizes a working through of the Jocasta Complex may involve, in Lacanian terms, a passage to the act. Antigone's desire is not (only) to have 'enemies of the state' properly buried and mourned as Butler suggests, but to recognize Others in a shared familial web who co-exist in a trans-subjective tension. The Ettingerian subject is several. Antigone's trauma is tied to the loss of Polynices yes, but it is more fundamentally about the 'trauma of others with-in myself [Antigone]' (Ettinger

2000b, p. 199). In Ettingerian terms, Antigone wit(h)nesses her Other in compassionate hospitality and knows that there is a future without her.

Acknowledgements

I thank Caitlin Janzen for her copy editing along with two anonymous journal reviewers who gave invaluable feedback. I also wish to acknowledge the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for funding this research through grant number 890-2014-0026.

Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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How to cite this article: Cavanagh, S L 2017 Antigone's Legacy: A Feminist psychoanalytic of an Other Sexual Difference. *Studies in the Maternal*, 9(1): 4, pp. 1–33, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.16995/sim.223>

Published: 01 August 2017

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