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On Antigone's Suffering

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Examining the contestation of interpretations around this work, I argue that the proliferation of exegetical material on Sophocles's Antigone *is related to a noncomprehension of the human motives behind her transgressive action. Did she ever love, and is there any suffering in her piety? If she didn't love (her brother), could she have suffered? I read the play alongside Kamila Shamsie's postcolonial rewriting of it in* Home Fire *to elaborate on the relationship between personal loss and collective (and communal) suffering, particularly as it is focalized in the novel by the figure of a young woman who is both a bereaved twin and a vengeful fury.*

Keywords: *Antigone*, Kamila Shamsie, plague, Islamophobia

"We might say (to use terminology borrowed from Kant) that Antigone, in speaking of love, means 'practical,' not 'pathological' love, a love that has its source in fondness or inclination," observes Martha Nussbaum.[1] When Antigone says "I shall lie with him as a loved one with a loved one," there is, Nussbaum insists, "no sense of closeness, no personal memory, no particularity animating her speech."[2] *Antigone* "is a play about practical reason," Nussbaum states: beginning with a question ("Do you know?"), as it does, it is preoccupied with evaluation, deliberation, reasoning, and problem-solving.[3] Nussbaum points out the ostensible equation of sanity with practical wisdom in the play, with Creon praising the chorus for their loyal reasoning and condemning Antigone's attack on civic values as a sign of mental illness. In Creon's constricted worldview, however, "good" and "just" have no "independent standing," relating exclusively to a man or a woman's "civic dedication" instead.[4] And, if he has revised practical wisdom to

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1 Martha Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 64.
2 Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness*, 64.
3 Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness*, 51.
4 Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness*, 56.

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make it all about active citizenship, his adversary Antigone has co-opted it for family relationship, narrowly and idiosyncratically defined. If, for Creon, you are an enemy of the city if you are not its friend, Antigone's "ruthless simplification of the world of value" manifests in a disavowal of the distinction itself.[5]

Relationship is a source of obligation for Antigone, regardless of the feelings involved. Nussbaum is no doubt influenced by Hegel's interpretation of the tragedy, which claims that the relationship between Antigone and her brother is "unmixed": "The brother … is in the eyes of the sister a being whose nature is unperturbed by desire and is ethically like her own."[6] Desire is coterminous with self-consciousness in Hegel and by saying the siblings are "unperturbed by desire," he implies that Antigone's desire for her brother, "being of the same blood," does not confront her with another self-consciousness, which she must recognize and eventually overcome. Moreover, he adamantly claims that the blood relationship makes desire impossible between sister and brother and that Polyneices binds her to balance and equilibrium instead. In this interpretation, Antigone is freed of desire and contingency, and this intransitive relationship enables her natal piety. She is in excess of desire, of the master-slave dialectic, of citizenship. Jacques Lacan too reads Antigone as excess, linking her to death, which is beyond understanding. In the *Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, Lacan sees in Antigone a limit concept—a mystery at the heart of tragedy—as she upholds unwritten laws beyond the limit or *ex nihilo* of the symbolic. As Judith Butler comments:

> By remaining on the side of the incommunicable sign, the unwritten law, she refuses to submit her love to the chain of signification, the life of substitutability that language inaugurates. She stands, Lacan tells us, for "the ineffaceable character of what is."[7]

In the course of the seminar VII, Antigone becomes "an illustration of the death instinct": it is as if Lacan, failing to taxonomize Antigone in the terms of livability, must read a desire for death in her.[8] This article addresses the void of meaning generated by critical interpretations of Antigone's no! to Creon, which struggle also to nominate and locate the yes! that Antigone's negations are in service of. I trace and articulate the critical reception of *Antigone* through the ages with particular reference to Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire*, a postcolonial, post-9/11 rewriting and novelization of the play. If there is no intensity of feeling in Antigone's piety, no *eros*—she never directly addresses a word to Haemon, who passionately desires her, speaking only of subservience to familial piety and a single set of duties—I ask if there could have been any suffering.

Mourning in the Time of Plague

The excess of meaning critics find in the depiction of Antigone is related to the excesses of a cultural phenomenon in fifth-century Athens, that of Homeric burial.

5 Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness*, 63.
6 G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel on Tragedy*, ed. Anne Paolucci and Henry Paolucci, trans. F. P. B. Osmastan, et al. (Smyrna, DE: Griffon House Publications, 2001), 269.
7 Judith Butler, *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 52.
8 Jacques Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis, 1959–1960, The Seminar of Jacques Lacan*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, vol. 7 (New York, 1992), 281.

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Bonnie Honig's reading of *Antigone* further depersonalizes Antigone as an expendable bit player in a larger politics of loss and lamentation. According to Honig, "Antigone does demand the right to bury her brother but Polynices is a pretext (just as his death is pretextual; it does not occur in the play). He provides an occasion for Antigone to object to the democratic order of the day."[9] Homeric and democratic rites of burial are reflections of these competing political orders, the heroic values of the first upholding the singularity of each aristocratic death, the latter subscribing to a more democratic practice of homogenization. Honig is quick to point out that Creon is an unlikely figure of democratic practice, particularly in light of his tyrannical injunction against burying Polyneices, which he arrives at without consulting the people or the elders.[10] His democratic leanings, in keeping with fifth-century democratic thought, lie instead in his ban on lamentation and his misgivings about the perils of individuality. Funeral orations, delivered by men, were favored by the polis over excessive demonstrations of grief by women: the masculinist form of eulogizing praised the dead for their service to the city, underscoring the replaceability of such servers, whereas women's loud laments mourned the singularity of the life lost. According to Honig, two interlinked functions of tragedy, that genre which monumentalizes and aestheticizes loss, are elaborated in ancient Greece: tragedy compensates for the loss of Homeric mourning practices; it serves also as a domain of controlled or disciplined subversion, where improper and transgressive emotions are momentarily entertained. Antigone's mourning revives "forbidden elements of women's lamentation."[11]

> She raised a bitter cry, as will a bird
> Returning to its nest and finding it
> Despoiled, a cradle empty of its young.
> So, when she saw the body bare, she raised
> A cry of anguish.[12]

Her keening and lamenting are neither private nor public (and formal), such as that of a professional mourner. Honig reminds us that "democratic Athens did not forbid kinswomen from mourning."[13] We are to assume, then, that Antigone is banned from ritualistic grieving for the following reasons: her lament is not confined to the household; it is raw and self-indulgent; it commemorates the private and the particular; she wails outdoors.

Antigone's discussion of her grief is calmly retaliatory at best and evasive at worst: we learn what it is by articulating throwaway comments on what it isn't. Asked by Creon if she disobeyed the law intentionally, Antigone answers in the affirmative. It was not Zeus who had imposed this decree on humankind, nor can a decree of the sovereign's

9 Bonnie Honig, "Antigone's Laments, Creon's Grief: Mourning, Member, and the Politics of Exception," *Political Theory* 37.1 (February 2009), 5–43, esp. 7.

10 The authoritative Kitto translation I have referenced uses the spelling "Polyneices"; spelled "Polynices" elsewhere.

11 Honig, "Antigone's Laments, Creon's Grief," 14.

12 Sophocles, *Antigone*, *Oedipus the King and Electra*, ed. Edith Hall, trans. H. D. F. Kitto (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), lines 422–26.

13 Honig, "Antigone's Laments, Creon's Grief," 22.

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"override the laws of Heaven."[14] Antigone expresses no compunction for breaching a man-made edict. Death is welcome, she says to her "countless miseries" and the premonition of meeting her doom causes her "little grief":

> But when my mother's son lay dead, had I
> Neglected him and left him there unburied,
> That would have caused me grief; this causes none.[15]

Antigone's reticence about voicing her multifaceted grief could be read against the mass grieving brought on by the great plague of Athens in late fifth-century BCE. Thebes is a sick city, where "a pollution holds / All our people fast in its grip."[16] The weltering surge of blood described at the start of *Oedipus Rex* (translated in *Oedipus the King* as the "angry surge of death")[17] finds an augury in Haemon in *Antigone*, the first of the Theban plays. Named after the Greek word for blood, this character highlights the preponderance of blood relation in the plot structures of the tragedy—and its scenes of carnage, brought about either by statist violence or through the actions of its disaffected and self-lacerating characters. The original word for the "polluted"[18] sword of the house of Oedipus is *miasma,* a word used to describe the pollution of the plague and the befouling attendant upon intra-familial murder. "Sickness has come upon us, and the cause / is you: our altars and our sacred hearths / Are all polluted by the dogs and birds / That have been gorging on the fallen body / Of Polyneices," Teiresias prophesises to Creon.[19] The guard describes Antigone as arriving obscured in a divine plague (*theian noson*):

> a storm of dust, which blotted out
> The earth and sky; the air was filled with sand
> And leaves ripped from the trees. We closed our eyes
> And bore this visitation as we could.[20]

However, the supernatural "visitation" Antigone is associated with does not contaminate like the plague, as does Creon's vindictive act of exposing the body on a high plain to mutilating birds and dogs. As the guard reports to Creon, the body of Polyneices is found "thinly covered / With dust," as if to avoid spreading pollution.[21] The dust is described as "dry"—"thirsty" could be another translation of *dipsian / konin*—suggesting Antigone's urge is natural, or in accordance with the laws of nature. "The earth itself longs for the funeral offerings that Creon has outlawed," suggests Rush Rehm.[22] It is notable that

14 Sophocles, *Antigone*, l. 454.
15 Sophocles, *Antigone*, lines 466–68.
16 Sophocles, *Antigone*, lines 1140–41.
17 Sophocles, *Antigone, Oedipus the King, and Electra*, ed. Edith Hall, trans. H. D. F. Kitto (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), l. 26.
18 Sophocles, *Antigone*, l. 172.
19 Sophocles, *Antigone*, lines 1015–18.
20 Sophocles, *Antigone*, lines 418–20.
21 Sophocles, *Antigone*, lines 255–56.
22 Rush Rehm, "*Antigone* and the Rights of the Earth," in *Looking at Antigone*, ed. David Stuttard (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 99.

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Antigone does not suffer from *nosos* like her male counterparts in Oedipal dramas: she is neither citizen nor scapegoat who will endure or cure the city. If she is associated instead with the "sickness that has come upon us," as Teiresius tells Creon admonishingly,[23] this is a scourge of nature that is itself innocent of meaning and intent. Polyneices's body spreads pollution because it has not been consigned to his rightful place below the ground. Similarly, Antigone's body, which has not found its proper place above the ground, spreads death like contagion, triggering the chain of events that claims Haemon's and Eurydice's lives.

In an article examining historical records of the plague of Athens, Robin Mitchell-Boyask writes of a ghoulish archaeological find in Athens in 1998, at the very edge of the ancient cemetery outside the city gates. The relics scattered in this newly discovered mass grave were dated back to the exact plague years (430–426 BCE):

> The corpses themselves seemed to have been simply dumped into the grave, without evidence of typical ancient funerary rituals, and the layers of corpses showed a progressive increase in anarchy.[24]

"Here is a sorrow that redoubles sorrow," Creon laments toward the end of the play, increasingly aware that the origin of this epidemic of sorrows is not Antigone, it is he himself.[25] Honig's reading of Homeric funerary rites versus the democratic alternative does not take into account the plague episteme that informs both in the fifth century: the gap between the collective body of citizenry in the unmarked grave, and the unmarked (though subsequently memorialized) grave of Polyneices is closed in the play not through democratic unity but the contingencies of burial and mourning in the time of plague.

Stranger's Rights and Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire*

In the Oxford World Classics translation of *Antigone*, Kitto renders Creon's peevish response to Antigone's singing of her own dirge in the following words:

> Take her away at once, and wall her up
> Inside a cavern, as I have commanded,
> And leave her there, alone, in solitude.
> Her home shall be her tomb; there she may live
> Or die, as she may choose: my hands are clean;
> But she shall live no more among the living.[26]

Honig interprets these lines in the original differently in her critical essay: "dead or alive, she will be stripped of her rights, her stranger's rights."[27] A stranger is someone who lives

23 Rehm, "*Antigone* and the Rights of the Earth," l. 1014.
24 Robin Mitchell-Boyask, "Plague and Theatre in Ancient Anthens," *The Lancet* 373, no. 9661 (January 31, 2009): 374–75 (https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(09)60123-9/fulltext).
25 Sophocles, *Antigone*, l. 1296.
26 Sophocles, *Antigone*, lines 885–90.
27 Honig, "Antigone's Laments, Creon's Grief," 22.

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in a city but is from somewhere else and does not enjoy the same civic rights as the locals: the ancient Greeks called them "metics." As Tina Chanter points out:

> Antigone's discrimination of her brother Polynices from a slave is part of a larger complex of themes concerning the status of outsiders, foreigners, and slaves in the Oedipal cycle, the significance of which has been largely neglected by the philosophical and psychoanalytic traditions.[28]

I will now dwell on a twenty-first-century retelling of *Antigone*, which, albeit in a time and setting vastly removed from ancient Greek tragedy, addresses the critical oversight Chanter draws attention to. It speaks to the plight of "outsiders, foreigners, and slaves" by contextualizing Sophocles's Oedipal family drama in questions of citizenship, colonialism, and race, in particular the insider-outsider, civilized-barbaric dichotomies determining paradigms of humanity and modernity in global cities to this day. *Home Fire* also helps us envision the role played by what Helene Foley terms the "female moral agent," one whose gendering is complicated by racial difference at that, in the framework of tragic ethics and the Aristotelian idea of tragic choice.[29]

I read Kamila Shamsie's 2017 novel *Home Fire* to supervise an undergraduate dissertation on the postcolonial Gothic. Shamsie does evoke the tropes of Gothic romance: incestuous twins, problematic patrilineage, the intimacy of violence, the uncanny optics of seeing and unseeing the corpse.[30] The Gothic's is a fractured, ruined realism, and although *Home Fire* is not constructed as a Gothic novel in the way, for instance, Ahmed Saadawi's *Frankenstein in Baghdad* is, it has an inscrutable object of terror in the figure of the anarchist and the suicide bomber.[31] The novel is set in the London of 2014–2015, its migrant ghettoes coming to terms with the controversial legislation that Home Secretary Theresa May implemented in 2014, which granted Britain the right to revoke citizenship of foreign-born Britons—even those holding only British nationality—if their actions were deemed "not conducive to the public good."[32] Shamsie's fictional home secretary, Karamat Lone, is the mouthpiece of the new Immigration Act of 2014. The historical irony is that, following the publication of the novel, we saw the appointment of the Conservative Home Secretary Sajid Javid. Javid, like Lone, is "the child of working-class Pakistani Muslim migrants, who makes his

28 Tina Chanter, *Whose Antigone? The Tragic Marginalisation of Slavery* (Albany, NY: The State University of New York Press, 2011), x.

29 Helene P. Foley, *Female Acts in Greek Tragedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 117.

30 For detailed analyses of Gothic conventions in English literature, see Fred Botting, *Gothic* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), and Judith Halberstam, *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995).

31 Ahmed Saadawi's *Frankenstein in Baghdad* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2018) also addresses the US War on Terror. It is set in Baghdad in the aftermath of the invasion on Iraq, a slaughterhouse from which rises an Arab Frankenstein's creature.

32 Theresa May, "Home Secretary Theresa May on Counter-terrorism," (transcript of the speech, exactly as it was delivered), Home Office and The Rt Hon Theresa May MP November 24, 2014 (https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/home-secretary-theresa-may-on-counter-terrorism).

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fortune in the corporate world before becoming a Tory MP."[33] Twitter called Shamsie "Nostrashamsie."[34]

Sophocles's the *Antigone* is the "marrow" of *Home Fire*, Shamsie has said in interviews following its publication. The twins Aneeka and Parvaiz are Antigone and Polyneices; Isma is the loving sibling Ismene, precipitately forgotten by the younger pair. Parvaiz is radicalized when a recruiter cynically lets him in on the family secret that his father was a jihadi who had fought in Bagram and was killed in Guantánamo. Aneeka seduces (but also falls in love with) Eamonn Lone, son of Karamat, hoping to use him to bring her brother home. It is interesting to note that although Aneeka does sacrifice marriage for a greater cause, and although she is indeed a brotherless daughter burdened with the need to create progeny to keep the family name alive, she is not the Euripidean "sacrificial virgin" Foley identifies Antigone with.[35] The loyalty, Shamsie also seems to say, lies not only with the natal family and natural laws but with the plight of the global Muslim community as a heterogeneous whole. *Home Fire* dislodges the discourse of family commitment or allegiance to the dead for one of collective resistance and lamentation. Although, in relation to the siblings' father and Parvaiz's own death, there is the Sophoclean determinism that "the dead made their own demands, impossible to refuse," Shamsie's characters remain ordinary enough through the course of the novel, their motivations understandable if not morally justifiable.[36] It is their time that is out of joint and oddly inhuman, Shamsie seems to suggest. In the final scene of the novel, we see the spectacle of Parvaiz's corpse in its ice coffin playing in a loop on British TV. Parvaiz had died trying to escape ISIS, and his dead body, refused entry into Britain, ends up in Pakistan, where Aneeka stages a televised vigil in a public park:

> Karamat pressed the mute button, and watched the doe-eyed girl in white, head covered, surrounded by blood-red rose petals, the park railings looking like a backdrop of prison bars in close-up shots of her.
>
> …
>
> For a few moments there was only a howling noise, the wind raging through the park, and then a hand plucked away the white cloth and the howl was the girl, a dust mask on her face, her dark hair a cascade of mud, her fingers interlaced over the face of her brother. A howl deeper than a girl, a howl that came out of the earth and through her and into the office of the Home Secretary, who took a step back.[37]

This is not simply a tableau of fate and elemental grief, but a politically strategic exhibition staged by the avenging Aneeka, a point not lost on Karamat Lone: "'Impressive,' said the Home Secretary."[38]

33 Kamila Shamsie, "True Story: Kamila Shamsie on Predicting the Rise of Sajid Javid," *The Guardian*, May 3, 2018 (https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2018/may/03/true-story-kamila-shamsie-on-predicting-the-rise-of-sajid-javid).
34 Shamsie, "True Story: Kamila Shamsie on Predicting the Rise of Sajid Javid."
35 Foley, *Female Acts in Greek Tragedy*, 172.
36 Kamila Shamsie, *Home Fire* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 152.
37 Shamsie, *Home Fire*, 221, 224.
38 Shamsie, *Home Fire*, 224.

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In her speech on November 24, 2014, May declared: "We have worked hard to make it easier to get rid of foreign nationals, including terrorists and terror suspects, who should not be in this country." This statement is echoed by Karamat Lone in a TV interview after the death of Parvaiz Pasha in response to Aneeka's desire to bring his body home: "We will not let those who turn against the soil of Britain in their lifetime sully that very soil in death."[39] "This country," "the soil of Britain," "foreign nationals"—each phrase with its own deep history of injury toward bodies not allowable in the political community. In the summer of 2018, Sajid Javid, as home secretary, declared that Alexanda Kotey and El Shafee Elsheikh, two recently captured members of an Islamic State group called "The Beatles"—so-called because of their British nationality—would not face trial in Britain. Their citizenship was revoked, and Javid said that he would seek no assurances that they do not face the death penalty if they are later tried in the United States.[40] In response to the outcry of human rights organizations such as Amnesty International and politicians from across the political spectrum, Number 10 asserted that it was "a priority to make sure that these men [who had perpetrated beheadings of prisoners etc.] face[d] criminal prosecution," hinting that in this case due process would be overlooked in the pursuit of "justice."[41] In 2019, we saw the case of the so-called ISIS bride Shamima Begum. She had left East London for Syria at age fifteen, and four years later, she appealed to be allowed to return to Britain. She had given birth to her third child in the Al-Hawl refugee camp—the other children had died in infancy from malnutrition and illness. "Citizenship is not a privilege; it is a protected status," the noted Human Rights lawyer Helena Kennedy states, yet the so-called war against terror in the post-9/11 years has seen many British citizens made unBritish. Citing Kennedy in an article on citizenship deprivation cases, Shamsie points out the dishonesty of exiling one's citizens using "go back where you came from."[42] Shamima Begum had been erroneously identified as a Bangladeshi national by the ministry of foreign affairs: Bangladesh was quick to retaliate that there was no question of her being allowed into the country. "I wasn't born in Bangladesh, I've never seen Bangladesh and I don't even speak Bengali properly, so how can they claim I have Bangladeshi citizenship," Begum told a reporter.[43] News of her son's death broke days after Home Secretary Sajid Javid decided to revoke her British citizenship, rendering her stateless.

Home Fire bristles with angry and sardonic humor, at its tragicomic best when it delineates "Mr British Values" Karamat Lone's dilemma:

> He returned to Holland Park after *Newsnight*, a tough interview as expected, but he'd maintained his calm, clarified that he had never made a decision about a corpse—his

39 Shamsie, *Home Fire*, 188.

40 "Islamic State 'Beatles' Duo Complain about Losing UK Citizenship," *BBC News*, March 31, 2018 (https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-43601925). See also "Islamic State 'Beatles' Duo: UK 'will not block death penalty,'" *BBC News*, July 23, 2018 (https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-44921910).

41 See "Islamic State 'Beatles' Duo Complain about Losing UK Citizenship," and "Islamic State 'Beatles' Duo: UK 'will not block death penalty.'"

42 Kamila Shamsie, "Exiled: The Disturbing Story of a Citizen Made UnBritish," *The Guardian*, November 17, 2018 (https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/nov/17/unbecoming-british-kamila-shamsie-citizens-exile).

43 "Shamima Begum Will Not Be Allowed Here, Bangladesh Says," *BBC News*, February 21, 2019 (https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-47312207).

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> decision had been about a living "enemy of Britain" (he used the expression three times, which seemed just right, though he might have been able to get away with a fourth).[44]

Parvaiz is no one's brother, no longer a British citizen, but an impersonal "enemy of Britain." Aneeka/Antigone, in an impassioned exchange with Eamonn Lone, states:

> Why didn't you mention that among the things this country will let you achieve if you're Muslim is torture, rendition, detention without trial, airport interrogations, spies in your mosques, teachers reporting your children to the authorities for wanting a world without British injustice?[45]

Shamsie weaves into the plot of *Home Fire* instances of the atrocities mentioned previously and also fleshes out the Muslim citizen's negotiation of what they know about Palestine, Iraq, and Afghanistan, with what Arun Kundnani calls "the fantasies of the war on terror," fantasies moderate Muslims must fall into step with to hold on to that coveted designation.[46] Kundnani estimated in 2014 that the FBI had one counter-terrorism agent per ninety-four Muslims in the United States, pointing out that one of the lists the authorities had drawn up about suspected radicals in the United Kingdom included three hundred children younger than fifteen years of age. Aneeka Pasha's claim to grieve, therefore, is also a claim to the right to reshape ethical discourse.

Later in the novel, in the scene of martyrdom she has staged for Karamat Lone and a growing global TV audience, Aneeka says:

> In the stories of wicked tyrants, men and women are punished with exile, bodies are kept from their families—their heads impaled on spikes, their corpses thrown into unmarked graves. All these things happen according to the law, but not according to justice. I am here to ask for justice.[47]

Helene Foley, commenting on the revolutionary charge of funereal rituals performed by women in Greek tragedy, draws attention to the use of lamentation to expose injustice, mobilize witnesses, and win public sympathy. Aneeka's statement to the gathered news agencies in this apocalyptic scene conveys her blocked and incomplete mourning, carefully chosen words of social protest connecting her profound and private loss to everyday atrocities. It is a theatrical tour de force, her face a muddy mask from the dust storm raging through the park, on which she draws lips with a spit-licked thumb. As Foley observes of Antigone, "She uses lamentation to carry her point assertively in a public context that might otherwise have silenced her speech."[48]

44 Shamsie, *Home Fire*, 230.
45 Shamsie, *Home Fire*, 90–91.
46 Arun Kundnani, *The Muslims Are Coming! Islamophobia, Extremism, and the Domestic War on Terror* (London: Verso Books, 2014), 110.
47 Shamsie, *Home Fire*, 224–25.
48 Foley, *Female Acts in Greek Tragedy*, 33.

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The social justice Aneeka seeks is also racial. A majority of Britons who have lost their citizenship in recent years are immigrants.[49] Nationality is overwhelmingly revoked from citizens who hail from Muslim countries: this is often done on the basis of secret evidence and on the unsubstantiated assumption that the dual national would be able to become a citizen of another country. A fabricated narrative of never quite belonging to the adoptive country fuels this practice. The novel captures the toxic xenophobia peddled by some British tabloids, their blatant lying and hatemongering. After Parvaiz Pasha's death, unnamed sources come to the fore, falsely claiming the boy had idolized his militant father from his childhood. "Aneeka 'Knickers' Pasha" and the "Muslim fanatic Parvaiz 'Pervy' Pasha" become criminal accomplices in this lurid retelling. "Knickers," so christened because of her opportunistic use of the home secretary's son to help her twin, is now the "terrorist's Twisted Sister" and the key player in "Hojabi"gate. The melancholy "Aneeka" section of the novel, heavy with her introjected object of grief, drowns out her thoughts and words in waves of reported hate speech.[50]

> —He won't be buried here?
> —No. We will not let those who turn against the soil of Britain in their lifetime sully that very soil in death.[51]

The preordained tragedy of lives doubly victimized by an unequal society and a tiered citizenship system is occasionally alleviated by Shamsie's wit. *Home Fire* gives us GWM—or the surveillance systems trained on Googling While Muslim—"ecosystem beards," and "passports that look like toilet paper to the rest of the world."[52]

Antigone speaks her last words 410 lines before the end: she is, in other words, missing from nearly one-third of the play. She speaks approximately 218 lines to Creon's 344. Kamila Shamsie circumvents this curious marginalization of Antigone in the eponymous play by titling her reworking *Home Fire*. The novel, Shamsie's seventh, is set in London, with excursions to Karachi, Amherst, Massachusetts, and Syria. The five acts of the play are five of the chapters in this work of prose fiction, only one of these named after Aneeka. Although this is not plague-ridden London, the twins are shown to inhabit a world reeking of untimely death: their father and mother lost at a young age, now Parvaiz. Like Antigone and her brothers, "Grief was the step-sibling they had grown up with, unwanted and inevitable."[53] The nexus of death and home is dramatized in the way Parvaiz dies in a drive-by shooting in front of the British Consulate in Istanbul,

49 For a detailed discussion of the two-tier citizenship system as it affects transnational migrants, see Anuscheh Farahat, "The Exclusiveness of Inclusion: On the Boundaries of Human Rights in Protecting Transnational and Second Generation Migrants," *European Journal of Migration and Law* 11.3 (2009): 253–69.

50 I am using the Freudian definition of melancholia here, which differs from mourning in its narcissistic identification with the lost object. If mourning involves severing ties with the dead, the melancholic, unable to form a new libidinal investment in the world of the living, fosters affective bonds with the dead. See "Mourning and Melancholia," *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and trans. James Strachey, vol. 24 (London: Hogarth Press, 1957), 237–60.

51 Shamsie, *Home Fire*, 188.

52 Shamsie, *Home Fire*, 65, 122, 209.

53 Shamsie, *Home Fire*, 193.

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where he had gone to find a way back to London; Aneeka meets her fate as she tries to bring him home because he, the dead brother, "wants to come home."[54] In the course of the novel, Aneeka's suffering is transmuted to a cautionary tale about despots and their deadly politics. If *Antigone* is consumed with the desire for proper burial, Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* is also about bringing unburied truths home. Both original and belated tragedy lose interest in the personal lives and loves of their protagonists. The twinned trajectories of Aneeka and Parvaiz—identical in some stretches, parallel and divergent in others—are eventually subsumed by the tableau of the former's spectacular defense of her stranger's rights in a park lined with banyan trees. In the end, as the Pakistani high commissioner tells Karamat Lone, Aneeka is not British, no one's sister, not even a grieving teenage girl, but "a woman who has stood up to a powerful government, and not just any powerful government but one that has very bad PR in the matter of Muslims."[55]

Antigone's Suffering in Exegetical Literature

In the *Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, Lacan states that "*Antigon*e reveals to us the line of sight that defines desire."

> We know very well that over and beyond the dialogue, over and beyond the question of family and country, over and beyond the moralizing arguments, it is Antigone herself who fascinates us, Antigone in her unbearable splendour. She has a quality that both attracts and startles us, in the sense of intimidates us; this terrible, self-willed victim disturbs us.[56]

As audience, we fall under the spell of Antigone. Lacan seems to regard Antigone as the subject, not object of fascination. Antigone's fascination is what orients her ethically (and here Lacan's reading differs from other readings of the play). For Hegel, for instance, Antigone and Creon represent complimentary ethical claims—which must be balanced and synthesised for Sophocles's tale to be morally uplifting. Lacan does not see in Antigone's desire an opposition to Creon's law in the sense that her actions are not direct responses to Creon's demands. What she embodies, instead, is the drive to bury her brother, her one duty. It is this "unshakeable, unyielding position," Lacan says, which bestows her with the "unbearable splendour" that, as mentioned previously, fascinates us.[57]

The history of Antigone's critical reception is the history of a longstanding fascination, as George Steiner argues in his 1984 book (his term for it is "obsession"). Matthew Arnold stated that the play turns upon "the conflict between the heroine's duty to her brother's corpse and that to the laws of her country."[58] George Eliot accused

54 Shamsie, *Home Fire*, 196.
55 Shamsie, *Home Fire*, 228.
56 Jacques Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book VII*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Dennis Porter (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 290.
57 Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, 247.
58 Cited in Simon Goldhill, *Sophocles and the Language of Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 150.

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him of misreading, but echoes of the Arnoldian interpretation can be heard in her observation that the play was about the struggle between "elemental tendencies and established laws by which the outer life of man is gradually and painfully brought into harmony with his inner needs."[59] The symbolic overload of Antigone figurations in Hegel, Kierkegaard, Goethe, Lacan, Woolf, Steiner, Butler, and many others helps contextualize her strange reincarnation in postcolonial fiction, such as Shamsie's *Home Fire.* In exegetical literature, Antigone stands interchangeably as the ethical subject, the force of resistance to the inderdictions of state power, the claims of kinship (in fierce, if also tragic, opposition to Creon's claim of universality), messianic violence, anti-authoritarianism, and feminism. Martha Nussbaum reads *Antigone*, a play that begins with the question "Do you know?" as a tragedy of deliberative reason. Each of the protagonists has a "simple deliberative standard and a set of concerns neatly ordered in terms of this."[60] And although one is far more correct in the content of her decision, both have, with devastating consequences, narrowed their sights. Shamsie's evocation of Antigone goes against the grain of Hegel's reading of her as hypostatized law and Lacan's deciphering in her actions the vicissitudes of the death drive. Nor is the figure easily reducible to the claims of the non-normative family, as Judith Butler powerfully argues. Like other works of postcolonial fiction before hers, Shamsie foregrounds the raced body at the intersection of love and politics, society, faith, and family: Antigone, here, is both timeless myth and a contingent redrawing of polity in the twenty-first century for the socially marginalized who seek cultural intelligibility. In a correction to Martha Nussbaum's vision of the antinomies of a deliberative world, Shamsie's *Home Fire* seems to suggest that there is no practical wisdom, no good human living to be had, for those doomed to make choiceless choices, or a bad choice that is also the only viable one to be made. After all, Sophocles had envisioned her as the foreigner—as Françoise Meltzer points out, his Antigone echoes the "leitmotif on homelessness begun in *Oedipus at Colonus*," a foreignness that takes on "ontological proportions since it partakes of what Kierkegaard called 'the fellowship of the already dead.'"[61] According to Meltzer, this explains her inscrutable desire and how home for her increasingly comes to mean "the foreign country of death."[62]

Sophocles's *Antigone*, which was the most popular play of the trilogy until Freud's introduction of the Oedipus complex in the early twentieth century, has been used to critique global wars (Seamus Heaney), the German occupation of Paris and Nazi censorship (Jean Anouilh), patriarchy (Simone de Beauvoir), masochism (Jacques Lacan), and heteronormativity (Judith Butler), to name some of the more prominent extrapolations. Seamus Heaney's *Burial at Thebes* used the contemporary parallel of the Bush administration forcing its coercive justification for the war on Iraq: as the edict

59 Goldhill, *Sophocles and the Language of Tragedy*, 150.

60 Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness*, 52.

61 Françoise Meltzer, "Theories of Desire: Antigone Again," *Critical Inquiry* 37.2 (Winter 2011): 175. Meltzer's reading, which focuses on Anouilh's Antigone, makes a valuable point about the misreading of Antigone's death drive as a desire for death: as with Freud's interpretation of *Thanatos*, it is an unconscious, cellular drive that has nothing to do with desire.

62 Meltzer, "Theories of Desire," 171.

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from Creon reads, "whoever isn't for us / Is against us in this case."[63] It is highly relevant that Heaney's version was commissioned to mark the centenary of the revolutionary Abbey Theatre in Dublin. Antigone has been read as the embodiment of the death drive and the desire for death—by no means the same thing—by Jean Anouilh, boredom, also by Anouilh, Adamic sin and guilt by Kierkegaard, the fundamental antinomy between state and kinship in Racine (La Thébaïde).[64] In his remarks on tragedy, Hegel identifies Antigone as the category of tragic situation that arises from a conflict between "ethical life in its social universality and the family as the natural ground of moral relations."[65] She has also, almost always, been read as the flip side of the Creon (sovereign) coin.

Antigone, who upholds blood ties, reverences "the gods of the nether worlds," Hades to Creon's heaven.[66] Both Creon and Antigone represent forces that upset the natural order of things. Creon has confused the upper and lower worlds, Teiresias says: "You have sent a life to settle in a tomb; you keep up here that which belongs below, the corpse unburied."[67] And Antigone's desire is not for law but "unwritten and unchanging" laws.[68] She—and this is the Lacanian reading—is the excess of the symbolic, of the registers of law, kinship, nomenclature. Hers is not a phallic jouissance: her wanting is not in response to man's fascination with *objet a.* She is a being of radical "solitude," Lacan states; hers is a jouissance "that is beyond."[69] In *Antigone's Claim*, Judith Butler argues that desire which bursts forth in this way, overtaking symbolic norms, leads to death. She also sees in Antigone's excessive grief for Polyneices the traces of her unspoken mourning for Eteocles, the other brother, and the ungrievable bodies of her parents, Oedipus and Jocasta. For the melancholic, language "becomes the event of the grievance." "Emerging from the unspeakable, language carries a violence that brings it to the limits of speakability," Butler states.[70]

Kamila Shamsie follows the dramatist Jean Anouilh in making Antigone the younger (rebel) sister, while law-abiding Ismene/Isma is the older. In one of the many Sophoclean echoes in the play, Isma says, "She is my sister. Almost my child."[71] There is, however, no room for a voice of compromise and accommodation in the original or its retelling. "Her wry cleverness is so compelling that it is difficult not to pine for her in the

63 Seamus Heaney, "The Burial at Thebes: A Version of Sophocles' 'Antigone'" (London: Faber and Faber, 2011), 3.

64 Notable literary and philosophical interpretations of Antigone, referred to in passing but not elaborated on in this article, include the following: Jean Racine, *La Thébaïde: ou Les Frères Ennemis*, in *Théâtre de Jean Racine* (Paris: Hachette Livre, 2018); Søren Kierkegaard, "The Tragic in Ancient Drama Reflected in the Tragic in Modern Drama," *Either/Or* Part 1 *Kierkegaard's Writings* 3, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1087); Simone de Beauvoir, "Moral Idealism and Political Realism," *Beauvoir: Philosophical Writings* ed. Margaret A. Simons, trans. Anne Deing Cordero (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004); Jean Anouilh, *Antigone* (London: Methuen Drama, 2000); George Steiner, *Antigones: The Antigone Myth in Western Literature, Art, and Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

65 Hegel, *Hegel on Tragedy*, 69.

66 Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, cited in *A Companion to Sophocles*, ed. Kirk Ormand (Oxford: John Wiley and Sons, 2015), 277.

67 Sophocles, *Antigone*, lines 1068–071.

68 Sophocles, *Antigone*, l. 455.

69 Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis,* 76.

70 Butler, *Antigone's Claim*, 80.

71 Shamsie, *Home Fire*, 235.

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later stages of the novel, from which she is largely absent," says Natalie Haynes of the character of Isma in her *Guardian* review of Shamsie's novel.[72] In Sophocles's version, too, Ismene had a paltry sixty lines. Hapless heirs to an incestuous marriage, each sister is heavily invested in the propriety of social ritual: "If we defy the King's prerogative / And break the law, our death will be more shameful / Even than theirs," Ismene cautions, evoking the sins of the son-husband and mother-wife, two names in one made obscene by that very collocation.[73] If, in her last moments, Antigone is not able to count her only surviving sibling as a friend despite Ismene's ardent declarations of love for her errant sister, it is because nothing can avail against her hopeless, impossible task, just as Ismene had predicted. In the final scene between the sisters in *Home Fire*, Isma is speaking words of love to Aneeka, trying to end her thrall to the dead Parvaiz, who, she beseeches, was also her baby brother. Rendered increasingly absurd in her blind love for and protectiveness toward her sister, she asks Aneeka to go back to university, study the law, and remember the dear departed in her prayers, as normal people tend to do. Each sister calls the other's love useless, the utilitarian logic of these statements a strange one to bring to bear on love objects and loving in the first place. The grieving Aneeka drives Isma out of her life, preoccupied as it is with Parvaiz's phantasmal presence: "This house was for the twins only now."[74]

Helene Foley has argued in her powerful critique of *Antigone* that the play's eponymous lead has difficulty communicating the meaning of her actions with her audiences both inside and outside the play. This is because "there is no traditional or recognized procedure for a female moral agent in classical Athens" and also because Antigone's predicament forces her to abandon "one set of traditional female obligations (to marry and to obey her guardian) to pursue another."[75] Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* grapples with the additional challenge of creating an intelligible Muslim Antigone with agency and heroic traits, which, ironically, are to be read in conjunction with the morally unintelligible act of forsaking the living for the dead or endangering living kith and kin to honor the dead. Why, we may ask of the twenty-first-century retelling is the brother (Parvaiz) irreplaceable but not the sister (Isma) or Eamonn (who is his parents' beloved son and his sister's beloved brother)? Why does Aneeka throw away her own bright life so lustily? Foley identified it as Antigone's "moral myopia," the classical heroine's refusal to betray her brother despite the brother's act of treachery to the state.[76] The anomie marking the Shamsie novel offers further insights. Instead of the plague, *Home Fire* describes the virulent Islamophobia of post-9/11 United States and the United Kingdom, which afflicts and quarantines all Muslim life, irrespective of class, faction, or acculturation. The novel had, after all, begun with Isma's protracted security interrogation at a London airport on her way to graduate school in the United States: "Do you consider yourself British?" "I am British," she had answered, painfully aware that despite not having a second country of which she was a citizen and despite her ready acquiescence

72 "Home Fire by Kamila Shamsie Review—A Contemporary Reworking of Sophocles," *The Guardian* (https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/aug/10/home-fire-kamila-shamsie-review).
73 Sophocles, *Antigone*, lines 59–61.
74 Shamsie, *Home Fire*, 199.
75 Foley, *Female Acts in Greek Tragedy*, 183.
76 Foley, *Female Acts in Greek Tragedy*, 197.

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with the passive citizenry that is the lot of the Muslim immigrant, this claim would sound equivocal.[77] Her sister Aneeka, a lawyer-in-training, knowingly eschews the unfair law for impossible ideals of justice.

What does it mean when Antigone says, "I have to please / The dead far longer than I need to please / The living"?[78] Is the key to Antigone's incommunicable suffering to be found in this speech act, with which she disavows rest and companionship in life for chimeras of rest and companionship in a wished-for afterlife? Although Antigone evokes sacred laws to justify her stance, it is arguable that even to a contemporary audience of Greek tragedy it would be adjudged "reckless" and "hopeless."[79] The chorus seems certain that "None are so foolish as to long for death," and, baffled by her death-defying stunts, proceed to call her stubborn, too bold, and too reckless.[80] The role of Haemon in *Antigone*, which adds to the sum total of suffering in this drama, if not the suffering of Antigone herself, raises further questions about Antigone's allegiance to the living. As commentators have pointed out, love scenes were considered improper in ancient Greek drama, nor can we find modern love on that Greek stage. Even so, there is no hint of romantic love between the pair. Antigone names Haemon just once in the play—"O my dear Haemon! How your father wrongs you!"—and even that line is attributed to Ismene in most manuscripts.[81] The introverted, melancholic charge of Antigone is such that she does not know that Ismene did eventually intervene on her behalf or that warm-blooded Haemon had overcome his submissiveness to lecture his father, Creon, on the civic virtues of dialogue, deliberation, and amenability. It is Creon who comes closest to understanding Antigone's love of the dead and the concomitant choice of a buried life: when he consigns her to a subterranean cave, imprisoning but not killing her outright, he says "She may live / Or die, as she may choose" in this new home, which, like her old home, is a tomb.[82] After all, as Antigone has said herself to Ismene, "I have given / My life already, in service of the dead."[83]

Antigone names her father's unconscious sin as "the source of all my anguish," a grudging statement that casts doubt on what had seemed, at first, an unhealthy fixation to her family of origin.[84] This lament is in response to the chorus's "For some old sin you make atonement," their unequivocal pronouncement that her act of civil disobedience, so fraught with risk and danger, should be seen as a daughter's paying for the sins of her father.[85] It is a peculiar evacuation of agency on the part of a female protagonist who had provoked her sister to make her act of transgression known, warning Ismene that she, Antigone, would hate her more if the latter kept it a secret. As with the references to the plague discussed in the earlier section, Antigone's tragic predicament is mapped between the extremities of collective or inherited guilt and suffering and personal innocence. Antigone ponders here the harsh fate that befell the race of Labdacus, the paternal

77 Shamsie, *Home Fire*, 5.
78 Sophocles, *Antigone*, lines 74–76.
79 Sophocles, *Antigone*, l. 47, l. 92, both spoken by Ismene.
80 Sophocles, *Antigone*, l. 220.
81 Sophocles, *Antigone*, lines 572–73.
82 Sophocles, *Antigone*, lines 888–89.
83 Sophocles, *Antigone*, lines 559–60.
84 Sophocles, *Antigone*, lines 856–57.
85 Sophocles, *Antigone*, l. 855.

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grandfather of Oedipus, reaching its apogee of "blind madness" in the marriage of her parents. The apostrophe that follows could refer to Oedipus or Polyneices and presents Antigone's own life as prescripted by fateful necessity:

> O brother, through an evil marriage you were slain;
> and I
> Live—but your dead hand destroys me.[86]

The chorus recognizes the piety inherent in an act Antigone has previously deployed the language of moral requirement to justify but point out at the same time that it transgressed authority, which brooks no disobedience. Simon Goldhill reads the ambivalence in the chorus's response to this interjection astutely:

> Their judgement on her attitude is unswerving. Her temper is self-willed (*autognôtos* clearly echoes *autonomos*): it is a further gloss on *mône*: her temper has left her separate from the community.[87]

Her unhappy and undead life is a suffering she has brought upon herself, the chorus insinuates, and Creon, lurking in the background in this scene, crudely reinforces the verdict. However, the slain becoming the slayer of the living is a recurrent theme in Sophoclean and Euripidean tragedy, and powerfully attaches to the synecdochal "dead hand." Although Antigone pursues death, she is pursued by death in turn, benumbing her life to regain its vitality. This might explain her compulsive need for the second burial, which suggests that she was not content with the first burial's lack of human attribution (and the dire consequences her own complicity in it would invite). "Is the deed to be valorized not by its own symbolic power, not by having been performed once and sufficiently, but by Antigone's discovery, arrest and punishment?" Harold Schweizer asks. "Is she to rival the death of Polyneices?"[88]

I had suggested at the start of the article that what is baffling about the suffering of Sophocles's Antigone is that there seems to be no discernible *eros* in her piety. The Antigone refigured by Kamila Shamsie is, by contrast, a moral agent who acts in the name of love. The inscrutability of her actions—the exhibition of her brother's putrefying body in a public park in Karachi to force a repatriation of his body to London, for instance—is attributed to the "madness of love." The Pakistan high commissioner, for instance, evokes a mythic tale of star-crossed lovers to the unmoved home secretary:

> Remember your Laila-Majnu, Karamat? The lover so grief-stricken at the loss of beautiful beloved that he wanders, in madness, in the desert. This beautiful girl in a dust storm has managed to become Laila and Majnu combined in the nation's consciousness.[89]

Home Fire presents tangled vocabularies of love: the maternal love of Isma, a young woman herself, for her orphaned twin siblings; the transfiguring passion that changes

86 Sophocles, *Antigone*, l. 861, lines 869–71.
87 Simon Goldhill, *Sophocles and the Language of Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 112.
88 Harold Schweizer, *Suffering and the Remedy of Art* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 89.
89 Shamsie, *Home Fire*, 227–28.

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Parvaiz in a matter of weeks and that his sisters mistake for his being in love for the first time; the devouring love (and subsequently rage) Parvaiz inspires in his twin; the unconditional love for her brother Eamonn admires in Aneeka; the love of Aneeka, which makes Eamonn step out of his father's shadow; and the worldly Karamat Lone's love for his beautiful, unworldly boy, the very child who precipitates his downfall. This overabundance of love does not, however, make way for better understanding and communication between the characters, and it certainly does not better or save their lives. Parvaiz does not get to tell her twin he is coming home to and for her; Aneeka does not get to express her abiding love for Eamonn except through the violent epithalamion at the novel's end. Antigone's suffering and the sum total of suffering in *Antigone*, with or without the tribulations of love, remain inscrutable because they are particular and peculiar in the original as well as in the retellings, and constitute a mythic madness resistant to generalization. *Home Fire* ends with an effulgent sight made uncanny by deadly afterimages, which the reader doesn't find verbalized on the page but must imagine instead. As with the chorus in *Antigone*, there are no commensurate words (of lamentation) with which to make sense of the tragedy.

In young Antigone's final lament, she grieves for herself because no one is left or allowed to grieve for her truncated life. She descends to Hades "all unwept of friends," and with no community of offspring.[90] Look what I suffer, at whose hands, for having respect for piety, she says: "How savagely impious men use me, / For keeping a law that is holy."[91] Her lament, which is not a recant, resonates in the interstices of the public (in front of the chorus) and private (in the royal enclave of Creon). As Charles Segal points out, she is performing both the female function of wailing and lamenting (*thrēnos*) and the male one of delivering her own funeral oration.[92]

> Behold me, O lords of my native city!
> Now I make my last journey;
> Now do I see the last
> Sun that ever I shall behold."[93]

She is led to the execution like a man, but hangs herself with her veil of femininity, her *hijab*, if you will. Neither an ideologue nor a fundamentalist, Antigone is, in fact, various and changeable in her dramatic monologues, lamenting the fate of dying "Unwept, unwedded and unbefriended" when she is not rejoicing at the prospect of meeting loved ones in the afterlife.[94] She seems to be reminding the audience of the deceptiveness of appearances and that, childless though she may be, she has shown an overabundance of maternal devotion in performing the last rites for her departed kin: "For when you died it was my hands that washed /And dressed you, laid you in your graves, and / poured / The last libations."[95] Where Western subjectivity is about a "dyadic unbridgeability" between

90 Sophocles, *Antigone*, l. 846.
91 Sophocles, *Antigone*, lines 942–43.
92 See Charles Segal, *Sophocles's Tragic World: Divinity, Nature, Society* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).
93 Sophocles, *Antigone*, lines 806–09.
94 Sophocles, *Antigone*, l. 876.
95 Sophocles, *Antigone*, lines 900–03.

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categories,[96] Antigone, with her uneasy kinship with death and her transgression of gender registers, is excess and extra, the sovereign subject-to-come. It is this nonsynchronicity with her time that is, I claim, the ground of her dreamless, public, furious yet nonviolent suffering. It is not a coincidence that both Sophocles's Antigone and Kamila Shamsie's Aneeka are portrayed as defiant children. In her final moments, it remains for the hitherto judgemental (and adult, if not aged) chorus to not simply see the action from both sides but feel and weep for Antigone in a way she was unable to care for herself. From this point in the play, most of the lines are sung, not spoken.

> I too, when I see this sight, cannot stay
> Within bounds; I cannot keep back my tears
> Which rise like a flood.[97]

96 Meltzer, "Theories of Desire," 185.
97 Sophocles, *Antigone*, 802–04.

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