National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
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M. A. Programme
"Anglophone Literature and the Greek Element"

Incest as Political Subversion in Sophocles' *Antigone* and Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*

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Date of submission: 8/2/2019

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Abstract

Relationships based on incest are intrinsically linked to the transgression of social and ethical mores. Because of its taboo nature, incest among siblings has the capacity to direct attention towards the politics of the family, as well as the politics of the society that surrounds it. This is the case with Sophocles's *Antigone* and Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*. Both texts prominently feature a set of siblings—or semi-siblings—whose intense devotion to each other ultimately results in the destruction of the community around them. Antigone and Catherine Earnshaw are prominent examples in Western literature of disobedient women, who transgress the boundaries of their feminine role and are in certain ways each punished for it. Although Heathcliff and Polynices might not share many common traits, their liminal position as both insiders and outsiders produces significant cultural anxiety. The almost obsessive relationship developed between the siblings is caused by and highlights the shortcomings of each community, while also reaffirming the status quo by pushing it to its limits. This study attempts to bring Bronte's and Sophocles's works together in an effort to explore the possibly subversive character of sibling incest and to uncover the forces that make such relations possible.

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1. Introduction

Incestuous relationships are not a novelty in literature, especially Western literature. From the time of the originary myth of Oedipus, incest has always symbolized a form of transgression that inevitably causes unrest, not only within the family that it takes place, but also in society as a whole. Whether it is viewed through a psychoanalytic or political lens, incest has always provoked a certain fascination due to its taboo nature. In the context of literary production, incest also presents itself as a useful subject for the exploration of oppression, transgression, and individual resistance. Most commonly in literature, consensual incest between siblings is presented as a reaction to societal forces that aim to restrict and control individuals, leaving them no room to express themselves or be free. Incest, in that sense, could be perceived as the product of extreme oppression which exposes the unsound foundations of a given social or political system

One such instance is Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*, where we encounter Heathcliff's and Catherine's semi-incestuous relationship. Having been raised as siblings from childhood under the same roof, Heathcliff and Catherine might not share a biological bond. The circumstances under which they grew up, however, make it difficult for the reader to ignore this type of kinship between them. Bronte's characters are infamous in British literature not only for the obsessive love that they bear for one another, but also for the destructive nature of their relationship. Throughout the novel their bond is established as so powerful, that their separation causes not only their own demise, but also the demise of the community around them. It is only after the spirits of Heathcliff and Catherine are reunited posthumously that peace can return to Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. The uniqueness of their relationship does not merely stem from the Romantic ideals that inform their bond, but also from the fact that it is a relationship built in an oppressive environment as a form of solidarity. However Catherine and Heathcliff may represent Romantic idealism, they are affected by the very real societal structures that are in place to oppress women, the lower classes, and those racially different. Their bond, in other

words, perfectly illustrates the ideology behind Bronte's novel that is, the delicate balance between the conventions of Romanticism and Victorian Realism.

As with any incestuous relationship, Freud's Oedipus complex is the theory that naturally lends itself to an exploration of the kinship relations in the novel. However, in this instance, the famous Oedipus complex may not be the most useful hermeneutic tool. Besides its focus on parent-child relations, its perspective is powerfully androcentric, while the woman functions almost exclusively as object of desire. Because of this, Oedipus could be rejected in favor of his daughter, Antigone. Sophocles' *Antigone* is a tragedy often associated with anti-authoritarian politics, as well as the conflict between natural and civic law. However, one should not ignore the very source of these conflicts: Antigone's devotion to her brother Polynices and her insistence on burying him, violating thus the laws of the state. Antigone's fixation with the burial and mourning of her brother plays such a prominent role within the play that, inevitably, critics have interpreted the sibling bond between them as incestuous. Judith Butler and Cecilia Sjoholm, among others, have noted the peculiar presence of incest, as well as the various parameters that might have led Antigone's emotions in that direction. These relate to the crucial political conflicts that are dramatized in the tragedy, which inevitably color our perception of this incestuous kinship. Similarly, if one wishes to "Antigonize" rather than "Oedipalizing" a text like *Wuthering Heights* in order to uncover its incestuous implications, one must also consider the political context in which the given sibling relationship takes place. Thus, the incestuous kinship that exists between the Antigone and Polynices, as well as between Catherine and Heathcliff, offers us an opportunity to analyze the political systems that are represented in these texts and explore the manner in which incest both undermines and reaffirms the established order.

Antigone and *Wuthering Heights* might not appear related at first glance. While *Antigone's* political dimensions are more or less explicit, Bronte's text seems lacking in direct political references. To the degree that it is influenced by the Romantic tradition, *Wuthering Heights* consciously distances itself from a strictly realistic worldview and highlights the ideality of the main characters' relationship. Heathcliff's origins, for instance, are left unexplained and mysterious in order for the character himself to acquire a somewhat mythical dimension. Moreover, the relationship between the two protagonists, although characterized by an intense passion, is curiously left unconsummated. Although Catherine and Heathcliff do not

seem to exchange much more than a kiss, their love is clearly not of the platonic kind. Simultaneously, though, *Wuthering Heights* revels in its contradictions so that, despite the prominence of Romantic elements, there is a concomitant realist tendency within the novel. Bronte offers "contradictory amalgams of the passionate and the pettish" as well as incidents of inseparable "high drama and domestic farce" (Eagleton 100).

The realist elements in the novel which seem more grounded are what allow us to draw parallels between Bronte's novel and *Antigone*. The fact that Heathcliff's identity is dubious exacerbates his otherness: his racial difference serves to distinguish him from the rest of the characters and ultimately dehumanize him. Multiple characters ponder on his origins often noting his dark complexion; Isabella Linton likens him to a gypsy, indicating his similarity to "the son of [a] fortune-teller" (Bronte 50). The discourse that is applied to Heathcliff is racially charged and, in combination with his initial low-class status, allows an exploration of the racial and class prejudices of the era. Catherine is easier to analyze from a realistic perspective, given her position as a woman in a strictly patriarchal society, as well as a woman who transgresses boundaries. As Nelly Dean observes, she "was too mischievous and wayward for a favorite" and "her spirits were always at high-mark, her tongue always going" (Bronte 36, 38). Her wayward nature in combination with her being a woman make her a socially marginalized individual who, understandably, finds communion with Heathcliff, the outcast of the family as well as an equally marginalized subject.

The political dimensions of Heathcliff's and Catherine's identities, explicitly presented in the narrative, allow comparisons to be made between *Wuthering Heights* and Sophocles' tragedy. Antigone's and Polynices' estrangement from the polis is not merely due to the act of burial, but it also springs from the unique subject positions of the two siblings. Polynices is the enemy-intruder, who is deliberately dishonored and denied a burial by the polis, while Antigone, apart from being a woman in an ancient Greek city-state, is also labeled as a political dissident for her insistence on burying her brother. Their respective marginalization from the city, only functions as a link that forces the two siblings to be even closer than usual and thus, upset the order. Their bond, similarly to Heathcliff's and Catherine's, transcends the boundaries of simple sibling love and results in an almost obsessive passion. Antigone does not merely desire Polynices' proper burial, at a certain point she seems to be pursuing her own death in order to be reunited with her dead brother. Similarly to Heathcliff after Catherine's death, Antigone becomes fixated on Polynices' dead body. Heathcliff

desires dead Catherine to such a degree that he unearths her corpse, while Antigone obsessively tries to bury the corpse of her loved on. The obsession with the dead is an idea that preoccupies both texts.

Incest is the point where the marginalization and oppression imposed by society is clarified by the rise of another equally disturbing force. The discomfort and transgression provoked by the incestuous situation may not constitute resistance per se, but rather the necessary outcome of it. Patriarchy and capitalism, oppressive systems in themselves, can only produce problematic relationships which end up exposing the very forces that constructed them. This study attempts to illustrate the subversive power of the incestuous bond in Sophocles' *Antigone* and Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* through an examination of the various facets of incest.

In the first chapter, I bring into the discussion various thinkers from antiquity to modernity whose work has some bearing on the idea of incest, with a special emphasis on its political dimensions. The chapter begins with an analysis of the private-political/public binary, as this was theorized by such philosophers as Aristotle, Hannah Arendt, and Giorgio Agamben. There then follows an analysis of the concept of the family and the way in which it relates to the political realm, as well as other oppressive structures, through the work of Friedrich Engels, Michel Foucault, and Sylvia Federici. The final section focuses explicitly on incest, concentrating on a critique of the Freudian theory and its apolitical character with the assistance of works by Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, and Cecilia Sjoholm.

The second chapter focuses on *Antigone* and the extent to which the protagonist plays the role of a political dissident. I examine the political significance of her mourning contra the mourning prohibition, bringing the private into the political. Following that, Antigone's relation with Polynices will be discussed, as well as the possible interpretation of an incestuous attraction towards the dead brother. The final section of the chapter brings to the foreground the reason why incest constitutes a transgression that exposes the established order in a unique way.

In the third chapter, *Wuthering Heights* is the prominent topic of discussion and the manner in which it could be related to *Antigone*. At first, I seek to prove the sometimes disputed claim that Catherine and Heathcliff could indeed be perceived as siblings, thus validating the existence of incestuous kinship between them. The Romantic idea of the social and the pre-social is also explored in relation to the political dimension of the private realm. Generally, I attempt to bring *Wuthering*

Heights and *Antigone* together in order to indicate similarities between their central characters and show the way both narratives present the theme of incest as a politically subversive act.

2. The Politics of Incest: A Theoretical Discussion

2.1 Zoe and Bios: From Aristotle to Agamben

When approaching incest from a political standpoint, it is useful to first examine the relationship between the family and the state. The degree to which these two realms may be interrelated has been contemplated and theorized from antiquity, especially as regards the nature of the private and the public sphere and the manner in which they may or may not interact. A number of philosophers and theorists throughout the ages have advocated either the idea that the private is segregated from the public and the political, or that the private and political realms are closely interrelated and dependent upon each other. In either case, what should be noted is that the aforementioned relationship and the manner in which it is conceptualized by each philosopher or theorist varies according to the era in question and the given mode of social organization.

Most notably, Aristotle was one of the first to have attempted to theorize the distinction between the private and political. *Zein* and *eu zein* are terms famously used by Aristotle to denote the condition within which human beings may satisfy their biological needs and their needs of participating in the polis. This distinction is essentially a reflection of the manner in which the ancient Greeks organized the polis and the household. The private life is seen to exist as a realm of necessity, whose purpose is to satisfy the basic needs of human survival. Political life, on the other hand, is not only completely separate from the private, but also the only sphere in which human beings may hope to achieve their higher purpose: the "good life".

Hannah Arendt, in *The Human Condition*, delineates even further the chasm between the private and the political, as it pertains to antiquity, while extending her analysis to later transfigurations of this distinction. She argues that, for the moderns, society is not seen to function separately from individuals, but in response to their needs, merging thus the political with the private. Towards the end of the 20th century, Giorgio Agamben grapples again with the idea of *zoe* and *bios* in antiquity to highlight the inextricable link between private and political life, while introducing the

concept of “bare life” and the function of the “homo sacer” in contemporary and ancient societies.

2.1.1. Hannah Arendt: From the Political to the Social

Although, in *The Human Condition*, Hannah Arendt grapples with a subject almost identical to that of Aristotle, her goal is to illustrate the shift that has taken place since antiquity. She devotes a significant part of the aforementioned work to the study of the manner in which the strict division between the private and political realms in antiquity is gradually transformed into a division of private and public, which is of course less strict and allows the two realms to fuse with each other. Arendt devotes this chapter to the delineation of the differences between the concept of the political and social, as well as the way in which ancient philosophers tended to define such concepts. Afterwards, she notes the emergence of the notion of the social which occurred at the end of antiquity and at the beginning of the middle ages.

What marks the decline of the political sphere, at least as it was understood by the ancients, is that the private realm came to be juxtaposed to the social. According to Arendt, “the decisive historical fact is that modern privacy in its most relevant function, to shelter the intimate, was discovered as the opposite not of the political sphere but to the social, to which it is therefore more closely and authentically related” (38). The social, in other words, presupposes the sum of a number of individuals all of whom, banding together, comprise a society that functions on the basis of the individuals’ needs. In that sense, the private is understood as immediately relevant to the social. This shift has also influenced the manner in which the notion of equality is perceived by the modern subject. While in antiquity equality was permitted to those already free “to live among [their] peers” and excluded those banished from the political and confined to the private realm, modern equality, on the contrary, presupposes that the public realm is equally responsible for all individuals.

Arendt also notes the significant transformation of the private sphere that directly affected the formation and perception of the public. The private realm, confined within the household, “was the sphere where the necessities of life, of individual survival as well as the continuity of the species was taken care of and

guaranteed" (Arendt 45). After the rise of the public realm, however, the private came to be associated with intimacy. Thus, the very characteristics that were frowned upon in antiquity, the failure of a man to be involved in civic life and the preoccupation with personal matters and isolation, are in modernity seen to constitute the individual's haven and shield against public scrutiny. Moreover, the private realm has also expanded and even invaded the public, given that even state politics are now understood in household terms. *Economy* is a term derived from the Greek words, *oikos* and *nemein* meaning the management of the household as an estate (Leshem 226). The "gulf" that once existed between private and political life has today disappeared, and the two realms "constantly flow into each other like waves in the never-resting stream of the life process itself" (Arendt 33).

Throughout the work, however, Arendt seems keen on the strict separation of the public and the private realms and the manner in which the Greeks used to structure these spheres. According to Colin Jager, "Arendt, of course valued the public sphere of contestation that she associated with the ancient Greek world; for her, the private realm of the household should remain completely separate from public life" (57). Moreover, this view is accompanied by the idea that the public realm is a realm of action and political debate that should be rescued from any association with violence or the necessities of life. As Arendt herself claims, political action in the public realm should "remain outside the sphere of violence" and should rather be "transacted in words" given that "finding the right words at the right moment […] is action" (26). This was of course a characteristic of the Greek world to which the modern world stands in contrast. Following Arendt, Jager indicates that "the rise of the social presents us with a homogenized world where action has been reduced to behavior, and statistical uniformity lends itself to the manipulations of a totalitarian state" (59). However, the question arises, how feasible is Arendt's idea of a contemporary society that takes its example from ancient Greece, and to what degree can the private and the public realms function separately?

2.1.2 Giorgio Agamben: The Homo Sacer

After Aristotle's and Arendt's insistence on the necessity of the strict separation of the spheres of the public/political and the private respectively, Giorgio Agamben proposes that they were never truly separate. Throughout his work, and especially as it pertains to his extensive study of the figure of the *homo sacer,* the idea that the political realm is dependent and defined by what it excludes is prominent and fundamental to his understanding of politics as a whole. This "exclusion politics," as it is called, denotes the power of the sovereign to determine the line between inclusion and exclusion or, as Peter Fitzpatrick puts it, "the sovereign is revealed only in or after the decision on the exception, the decision whether or not a state of exception exists and, therefore, the decision whether the normal order exists" (8). Agamben commences his study in response to Foucault's work on biopolitics and, of course, Arendt's work on totalitarianism and *The Human Condition*, but also as a critical perspective that seeks to expand on these theories.

In *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, Agamben first grapples with Aristotle's distinction of the necessities of life being confined within the household and the political being confined in the public sphere almost. However, in referencing Aristotle he makes one important point: when the human is referred to as "politikon zoon", or political animal, the "political is not an attribute of the living being as such, but rather a specific difference that determines the genus of zoon" (Agamben 2). *Zoe*, or bare life outside the political realm, is constantly present within all the spheres of human life, even when it is excluded. In other words, when the ancients attempted to exclude bare life, and by extension the private realm that it is supposedly confined to, inadvertently, they also included it within the definition of the political life. Consequently, not only is it not possible for political life to be conceptualized as unrelated to the necessities of the body, but also its very definition is dependent on it. Agamben is very critical of Arendt on this point, claiming that the "analyses she had previously devoted to totalitarian power" were utterly lacking in any biopolitical perspective (4). In a similar manner, he criticizes Foucault for not dwelling "on the

exemplary places of modern biopolitics: the concentration camp and the structure of the great totalitarian states of the twentieth century" (4).

Agamben, in other words, is not so much interested in defining private life and the household as such, but rather on the manner in which the biological necessities of life are incorporated into the political. The point of departure between ancient and modern democracies, according to Agamben, is that in antiquity there was no pretense of vindicating and liberating *zoe* as we find in modern liberal democracies (9). However, in an effort to promote the value of bare life, contemporary republics tend to conflate political and bare life thereby determining inclusion and exclusion according to who is conceptualized as a living being within the city. This is the point where Agamben introduces the concept of *homo sacer,* "an obscure figure of archaic Roman law" denoting an individual "who may be killed and yet not sacrificed" (8). In modern politics, however, the *homo sacer* indicates a human life that is included yet also excluded from the polis. In other words, the *homo sacer's* exclusion from the order of the polis is preordained in the law of the polis itself, thus making the exclusion a part of the legal system. This is one of the most main reasons why Agamben in his work on the *State of Exception* is critical of liberal theorists' insistence on invoking the rule of law and the juridical order for the state's violation of the human lives it excludes (Kohn 1).

2.2 The Family Unit and its Political Extensions

In order to explore the manner in which incest may result in political transgression, it is important to illustrate the degree to which the family not only replicates, but is also the product of oppressive societal forces. The institution, in other words, must be inspected not as an independent or even natural entity, but rather as a social construction which instills particular values into the family unit. Society is reproduced both physically and ideologically through the family which, through the roles that are distributed to its members, fosters forces such as patriarchy and capitalism. Of course, this is not an original observation given that various authors have indicated the manner in which the family reproduces and facilitates the aforementioned oppressive structures.

2.2.1 Friedrich Engels: The Origins of the Family

One such early instance is Fiedrich Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State.* In his study, Engels examines the current model of the family not as a natural entity with predestined roles for each of its members, but rather as a social construct, heavily reliant on capitalism and the principle of private property. Engels begins his analysis by first distinguishing what he regards as the prominent eras of the human race, namely savagery, barbarism, and civilization, each of which he sub-divides into a lower, middle, and upper stage. This distinction is not of Engels' invention, but based on the theories of Lewis H. Morgan which Engels' utilizes as the basis of his developing theory. Consequently, his analysis of marriage and the family conforms to the aforementioned divisions, with each type of marriage corresponding to a specific stage of human development. He argues that: "for savagery" there exists "group marriage; for barbarism-pairing marriage; for civilization-monogamy, supplemented by adultery and prostitution" (Engels 80). It should be also noted that the domination of women by men gradually arises as marriage shifts from one stage to another, a development which, of course, significantly represses women as human and sexual beings, while simultaneously offering sexual freedom to men at the expense of women (80-81).

This analysis of stages of human development and subsequently marriage are, for Engels, inextricably linked to the rise of capitalism, property, and the family as a significant economic unit. Following Morgan, Engels argues that "primitive society exhibited egalitarian social and sexual relations; collective production and communal ownership of property" (10). However, as human society gradually evolved, greater wealth was accumulated, a development which lead to not only to the creation of the notion of property, but contributed also to a shift in social relations. A fundamental parameter of that shift was the subservience of the woman to the man within the family and her status as a commodity in the marriage market. Women were considered "as the sources of new human beings […] to be exchanged as valued property" of the family, which, at that moment, privately owned what was formerly collective (Engels 10). Engels, however, does not merely engage in an analysis of the

family as it developed under capitalism; he envisages the manner in which the family unit would be disengaged from capitalist and patriarchal relations, and enforced monogamy come to an end. When wealth ceases to be concentrated "in the hands of one person—and that a man" and, consequently "the desire to bequeath this wealth to this man's children and to no one else's," then the organization of the family and its role as a fundamental economic unit is completely transformed (81). At the same time, the means of production become publicly owned, while private housekeeping and childcare become a communal industry, rendering thus the subjugation and sexual repression of women unnecessary. This development, according to Engels, not only does not undermine monogamy, but, on the contrary, assists in its realization. When women are liberated from oppressive notions such as "virginal honor and feminine shame" and thus from economic dependence on men, they shall be free to pursue the love of the men they desire (81-82). In other words, for Engels, not only is the family heavily informed by capitalist and patriarchal relations, but it is also constructed by them, so that the dissolution of patriarchy and capitalism is linked to the dissolution of the traditional family and its transformation into a more egalitarian and communal institution.

2.2.2 Michel Foucault and the Biopower of Family

Foucault is another author who has attempted to explicate the manner in which the family functions, especially as it relates to systems of power. Foucault, however, unlike Engels, distances himself from an explicitly Marxist and historically materialist analysis and pursues a reading that relates the family to the notion of biopower. Briefly described, biopower is the means by which the state enforces its power over its subjects through the regulation and subjugation of the body in order to achieve control over the population as a whole. Foucault's analysis of the family cannot be found in a single work, but extends throughout his oeuvre. As Chloe Taylor observes, Foucault understands family as a "traditionally sovereign institution whose power has been slowly diluted over time" and "infiltrated by discipline and co-opted by biopower in 'supplementary' ways" (Taylor 202).

Although, Foucault's approach is not entirely Marxist, he seems to hold similar opinions to those expressed by Engels, given that he acknowledges the modern family as a structure that arose in the nineteenth century and differed from earlier forms. Prior to the nineteenth century, the family was focused on blood relations and kinship among its members, which were not restricted to the nuclear family. According to Taylor, "the new family is a medicalized, panoptic, and normalizing entity, and parents function as doctors within it—or to be exact, as the dupes, clones, and instruments of doctors, therapists, and biological state interests" (208). In other words, the function of the modern family is not dissimilar to the function of a psychiatric hospital, which aims to control the manner in which the patients along with their bodies operate through various forms of surveillance. Moreover, the rise of the nuclear family and the manner in which the parent-child relationship took precedence resulted in a more intimate, almost incestuous relation between them. The parent is now called to inspect and control the child's body in a manner that significantly aims at limiting its sexuality. Foucault, in this case, cites an early example of parents being encouraged by doctors to beware and punish masturbation in their children through "constant attentiveness to one's children, a smelling of sheets and hands, an alertness to erections, an examination of undergarments, a surveillance of children as they washed, went to bed, woke up, and slept, and even a binding of bodies and a sharing of beds" (Taylor 209). Thus, the fear of any sexuality expressed by the child paradoxically results in the sexualization of the child by its own parent. The suppression of "deviant" sexuality only encourages the appearance of incest.

According to Foucault's analysis, the surveillance of the body enacted by the parent towards the child, and, to an extent, the power that the father exerts towards the mother and the children, is established in order for the family to function as an agent for the state. Children are thereby disciplined to obey the rules set by the parents in the same manner as the citizen must conform to the rules of a society. Individuals who are deemed different in terms of gender or sexuality are forced to submit to the prescribed modes of behaviour or incarcerated, ostracized, and excluded from the body politic. Just as the state controls the family and its reproductive order, so the family enforces its rule upon its members.

2.2.3 Sylvia Federici: Caliban and the Witch

In her 2004 study, *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body, and Primitive Accumulation*, Sylvia Federici attempts to explain the transition from feudalism to capitalism by focusing on women and the manner in which their position changed during this transition. While she belongs to the Marxist tradition, she aims not only to draw attention to women's position within capitalism, but more importantly to propose that capitalism relies heavily on the suppression of women and the exploitation of their reproductive labor within the family. Contra Marx, she rejects the notion that capitalism represents a progression compared to feudalism and proposes that the status of women on the contrary was debilitated, citing the vilification of women's power through the witch hunts. Federici's argument is fundamental for our project, given that for capitalism, women's labor and power needs to be devalued and strictly confined within the boundaries of the patriarchal family: if man's sole function under capitalism is to be a worker, woman's role should be to reproduce workers for the benefit of the system.

Federici's central thesis, therefore, is that "capitalism has created more brutal and insidious forms of enslavement, as it has planted into the body of the proletariat deep divisions that have served to intensify and conceal exploitation" (64). This is not to imply, of course, that under feudalism women or vulnerable classes enjoyed any privileges or that patriarchal relations were the invention of capitalism. The idea behind Federici's argument is that capitalism exacerbated what already existed and in some cases, added even more oppressive structures. One such structure came to be "the Great Witch-Hunt" of the 16th and 17th centuries, the "state-sponsored campaign" aiming at the "defeat of the European peasantry, facilitating its expulsion from the lands it once held in common" (63). This process resulted in "the transformation of the body into a work-machine and the subjugation of women to the reproduction of the work-force" (63). Consequently, women were confined to the home, while their domestic labor was also devalued.

Whether the family is examined from an orthodox Marxist perspective or not, it becomes apparent that the family cannot be divorced from the political forces that have affected its development through the ages. It is a unit so steeped in regulatory

societal and political systems, that any transgression, any attempt to overturn the dominant ethic through which it operates must be a politically charged act. Incest is by definition an act transgressive to the status quo, not only because it rejects marriage, but also hinders the smooth reproduction of the family. If family and marriage are constructed in a manner that encourages the subjugation of women and the ostracization of individuals that do not fit its patriarchal and heteronormative narrative, then incest in this sense could be the means through which the political function of the family is exposed and undermined. The implication here is not so much that incest constitutes a liberating act or a means to escape the patriarchal and capitalist order of the family, but that it accentuates these problems to a degree that makes them both visible and disturbing. According to such a reading, incest both reveals and perpetuates the family's insularity and egocentrism while highlighting its oppressiveness for individuals which, paradoxically, results as much in transgression as in compliance.

2.3 The Politicization of Incest

Sigmund Freud's theory of the Oedipus complex is the incest theory par excellence that concerns itself with the manner in which incest materializes in human relationships and determines personality. Freud, being preoccupied of course with the field of psychoanalysis, does not refer to actual incestuous relationships among family members, but rather demonstrates how incestuous desire is intrinsic to human beings and, unable to actually manifest within a family, seeks other avenues either to burst or be repressed. Freud's theory rests heavily upon Levi-Strauss' theory on the incest taboo, "the elementary structure of kinship," which is "based on a certain pattern of exchange of goods and possessions, all dictated by one fundamental law: the prohibition against incest which forces men to search for wives outside of the family" (Sjoholm 88). Both of these interconnected theories attempt to demonstrate the transgressive tendency in the human psyche, especially when faced with prohibition. Incest, in this case, signals the desire for transgression against something that has been explicitly forbidden.

A number of other psychologists and philosophers, however, point out certain unfortunate implications that arise with the Straussian and Freudian approaches to incest. Most prominently, the Oedipus complex, as articulated by Freud, presents a narrative that is not only strictly patriarchal, but also fixated on private filial relationships and completely overlooks any societal and political implications that might affect human desire. Most prominent among those philosophers, critical of Freudian psychoanalysis, are Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari whose seminal work, the *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, grapples with the basic tenets of Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis. It is an attempt on their part to expose the manner in which Oedipal interpretations of human psychology not only have become unnecessarily omnipresent, but also tend to depoliticize and restrict desire. Feminist critics have also brought to the foreground the patriarchal logic lurking beneath the Oedipal analysis and have attempted either to modify and translate Freud's ideas into a more feminist context, or even transform them into completely new theories. One such instance is Cecilia Sjoholm's *The Antigone Complex*, in which the author provocatively proposes the aforementioned complex based on Oedipus' daughter, Antigone. This new type of complex is intended to incorporate Freud's sidelined and neglected female desire, while also questioning the centrality of the male in psychic processes.

Both of the above theories, which shall be analyzed presently, set out to deliberately oppose previous interpretations of incest and filial relations as a whole. It is also notable that they do so in a manner that questions Freud's insistence on entrapping desire within a strictly patriarchal family structure and hindering its interaction with social and political structures. In other words, what the aforementioned critiques of Freud explicate is that the Oedipal approach to incestuous relations rests heavily upon structures that not only wish to exclude and objectify women, but also to impose a specific narrative that sublimates the human into the family and excludes any relations to the social. Oedipus, in this case, becomes the means through which the private extricates itself from the public and presents itself as completely independent from external forces.

2.3.1. Deleuze and Guattari: Anti-Oedipus vs. Oedipus

Deleuze and Guattari, in *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia,* posit themselves against a long and prominent tradition within the field of psychoanalysis, that of Freud. Their critique incorporates as well as criticizes a number of psychoanalysts and thinkers, but most prominent of all is their critique of Freud's Oedipus complex. The basic thesis of their work is chiefly preoccupied with the relationship of desire and human psychology and the manner in which it is influenced by capitalist society. Moreover, their critiques lead them to develop the original concept of "schizoanalysis," that is an approach to the complex that does not rely on "reductionist modelisations" but rather attempts to explain it utilizing all its complexity (Guattari 61). The obsession of Freudian psychoanalysis with the figure of Oedipus as well as the institution of the family is criticized and used to promote a more political and complex approach to human desire.

It is important to note that, when Deleuze and Guattari engage with Freud's theories, they do so not to reject his psychoanalysis wholesale. After all they do utilize the concept of desire as a concept "free from specific objects pre-determined to be desirable" as defined by Freud. (Holland 87). However, they take Freudian theory to task to demonstrate how "Freud then betrays his own greatest discovery" and assigns "pre-determined objects and aims," thus creating the Oedipus complex (Holland 87). These aims of course are confined within the family, in the figure of the mother, who is the desired object of the son, and of the father, with whom the son identifies. Consequently, desire that might have been directed outside of the private sphere and might even challenge the established capitalist order gets effectively redirected towards family relations and is reduced to mere desire for one's mother. The Oedipal image, in other words, "comes to take the place of the repressed or of the thing that is effectively desired," thereby monopolizing one could say the "desiring production" which in its turn "is what would introduce disorder and revolution into the socius" (Deleuze and Guattari 173). In this case, the image of Oedipus becomes bait in which desire is entrapped or as the two thinkers rather humorously put it: "That's what you wanted! The decoded flows were incest!" (Deleuze and Guattari 166).

Anti-Oedipus does not merely engage with Freud's theory itself, but rather elects to inspect also its collective impact on the whole field of psychology and psychoanalysis. Freudian interpretations and analyses of the human unconscious have

become extremely prevalent to the point where Deleuze and Guattari refer to it as the "imperialism of Oedipus." The term imperialism could be interpreted both figuratively and literally, given that not only is it widespread among psychoanalysts, but also in that it is a western concept that has been repeatedly used in the interpretation of social dynamics in non-western cultures. What Deleuze and Guattari call into question is "the frantic Oedipalization to which psychoanalysis devotes itself, practically and theoretically, with the combined resources of image and structure" (53). The unconscious, under Freudian influence, has now become a theatre that could only be interpreted through symbols and myths rather than a factory that engineers desire. The social and metaphysical are treated as an afterthought and "all agents of social production and anti-production are […] reduced to the figures of familial production" (58, 64). Rather ironically, the prevalence of the Oedipus complex has come to castrate the unconscious and confine it within the sphere of the familial and the mythical, which ultimately is proven to be an ineffective way to actually cure the patient.

As was mentioned earlier, Oedipalization also has a detrimental effect on non-western cultures, creating thus neocolonized subjects. The family model on which Oedipus relies on for his existence is a strictly nuclear one, containing the mother, the father and the son. Consequently, when Oedipus is applied, the familial relations assumed necessarily fall under the paradigm of the western nuclear family which, of course, is modern and not universally applicable. In non-western contexts what might be interpreted as Oedipal is "never Oedipal: it [is] plugged into social organization and disorganization". "Everything [is] scattered in the thousand break-flows of the chieftainships, the lineages, the relations of colonization" and yet it forcibly "becomes Oedipal in part, under the effect of colonization" (Deleuze and Guattari 168). Ultimately, what the Anti-Oedipus is tasked with "is to break out of the stifling confines of the nuclear family, and restore analysis to its full socio-historical context" (Holland 91).

2.3.2. The Antigone Complex: Filling the Negative Space

Oedipus and his impact on psychology have been excessively discussed, both as a universal figure and as detrimental to our understanding of human psychology in relation to its environment. It is only natural that when the discussion around Oedipus has been exhausted to move on to an equally defining figure, Antigone. As a mythological figure, Antigone finds herself in an interesting position, given that she is defined both as a product and even perpetrator of incest, but also as a figure that openly challenges the established political order. In contrast to Oedipus, analyses that involve Antigone necessarily incorporate an additional socio-political parameter and do not restrict themselves to a family unit cut off from the political. Furthermore, Antigone is also posited against an Oedipal tradition that is, at times, extremely androcentric and patriarchal and which silences the female subject. At this specific point Cecilia Sjoholm arrives with her work, *The Antigone Complex: The Ethics and the Invention of Feminine Desire*, to fill the space that has been left vacant and critique the absence of female desire in traditional Freudian theory.

For Sjoholm, the Oedipus complex is first and foremost a patriarchal structure that functions on the "patriarchal logic of prohibition and metonymic displacement" which posits "the law of prohibition" as "paternal" and "the object" as "always feminine" (83). The Oedipus complex, in other words, concerns the male subject and his relation to the law of the father and his forbidden desire for his mother which, in turn, ought to be displaced to another female figure, outside the family. Thus the "law against incest" is instituted and the superego of the boy is formed in order for his desire to be sublimated to cultural and moral values (Sjoholm 85). It becomes apparent that the figure of the mother functions merely as a vessel for the son to pour his desire into, while the figure of the daughter within the family and the role that her desire plays is unimportant. "Feminine desire" in this case "is considered an Oedipal failure," a region that is impossible to explore and stubbornly remains mysterious (Sjoholm 86). Feminine desire thus becomes that which is naturally resistant to the common ethics of the community and resides in the margins.

At this point, Simone de Beauvoir enters the equation in order to demonstrate the patriarchal roots of psychoanalysis and the manner that it deliberately constructs femininity and feminine desire as something dependent and naturally inferior to the male. De Beauvoir questions womanhood and femininity as a patriarchal construction and also proposes that the phallus does indeed contain power, not however because of its nature, but rather because of the value it is given by society (Sjoholm 88, 90). Male and female are symbols, in the Lacanian sense, which derive their strength or weakness not because of their ontology, but rather because they have been culturally defined so. Consequently, it is impossible for the Oedipus complex to take into consideration female desire, because by its very conception, it relies on its absence. Thus, female desire "is not only a symptom of patriarchy but a deficiency with a challenging potential […]. [Woman] incarnates the false promise that something will fill the lack on which the patriarchal economy is based" (98).

In order to highlight this negative space that female desire occupies under patriarchy, Sjoholm proposes the Antigone complex. In the case of the Oedipus complex, while the male is able to displace the desire for the mother towards other women, the female has no such ability, leaving the space previously occupied by the mother vacant. Consequently, Sjoholm proposes that "desire has not an aim but a cause," that is desire does not create objects and possessions, but it becomes "a traumatic origin" instead (100). Desire springs from the void that has been left vacant. Taking the figure of Antigone into consideration, we discover that her obsession and desire for her brother has as its origins the void manufactured by the polis itself. Her brother is constructed as a political enemy unworthy of burial, while she "is deprived of possessions, status, and family" (103). In other words, the negative space, in which Antigone is confined, is constructed by the polis itself, which in turn forces Antigone to challenge the established order of the community. The Antigone complex, in this sense, is the void created by the polis which eventually returns to destroy it.

3. *Antigone*: When Prohibition Provokes Transgression

Antigone is a figure that has been inextricably linked to political dissidence and rebellion against oppressive systems of government in the public consciousness. The most common interpretation of Sophocles' protagonist is that of a courageous young woman who, against all odds, attempts to give her brother a proper burial, disobeying the edict of the King of Thebes who is usually represented as an oppressive tyrant. *Antigone* is a play that most effectively demonstrates the conflict between human and divine law and, to a certain extent, posits the importance of the divine, ethical obligation above that of the political/secular. It is a play where "Homeric honor" is posited against "democratic unity and membership" (Honig 96). However, from a different perspective, Creon's actions are actually expected of him and not far from the manner that 5th century Athens functioned. In other words, Creon's unexceptional behaviour for his era raises important questions concerning the manner in which democratic states have functioned from antiquity and the politics of exclusion that they might have enforced. It is a play that invites its audience to interrogate sovereignty and especially the manner in which it constructs its outcasts.

The position of the outcast in *Antigone* is of course occupied initially by Polynices and afterwards by Antigone herself. Polynices, by virtue of being an enemy of the polis, is to be left unburied outside the walls of the city and consequently to be left dishonored, while Antigone only becomes an enemy of the state after she decides that it is her duty to bury her brother in spite of Creon's explicit orders against it. It is at this moment that this special relation between Antigone and Polynices is fashioned and will ultimately lead to Antigone being turned into an outcast and her eventual death by execution. It is a relationship that Antigone honors throughout the play almost obsessively, sacrificing in the process any chance she might have had for a future, including a husband and children, rejecting repeatedly any opportunity to deny her "crime" and ensure her survival. The relationship forged between Antigone and the dead Polynices surpasses that of a mere sibling bond and instead could be perceived as one arising from a societal system that has constructed them as criminal outcasts. Antigone implicitly fosters an almost incestuous obsession towards her dead brother, an obsession, however, that arises out of the prohibitions and exclusions enacted by the polis.

The incestuous overtones in Antigone's and Polynice's relationship have been detected by a number of different theorists. Most notably, Cecilia Sjoholm notes that Antigone's actions during the play, namely the burial of her brother and her defiance towards the state, are not fuelled merely by the desire to bury her brother "as a family task" but rather by her "impossible desire for her dead brother Polynices" himself (102). Antigone, in her famous dirge, vocally rejects the prospect of marriage and children, claiming that her brother is irreplaceable. She also explicitly states that the tomb that she is about to enter is to become her bridal bed and the place where she shall meet her dead family again. For the Labdacid family, it seems impossible to escape any associations with incest, whether that incest is explicit as in the case of Oedipus or implicit as in the case of Antigone and Polynices. That incest, however, especially as it pertains to Polynices and Antigone, is not merely an expression of the desire to transgress societal mores, but moreover manufactured by the aporias of the polis and the state's politics of exclusion.

3.1 Bringing the Private into the Political: The Mourning Prohibition

According to Aristotelian philosophy, the private and the political realm ought to be and remain completely distinct. This is an idea which is reliant not only on ancient Greek conceptions concerning the function of the polis and the household, but also heavily dependent on the era's exclusion politics. The political realm was only accessible to those deemed worthy by contemporary society's standards, in this case, autochthonous Athenian men. The private realm of the household was the space where almost everyone excluded by the polis was relegated, that is women and slaves. The public realm of the polis was the space occupied by free men, all considered to be of equal standing, whereas the household was the space where the "natural" inferiority of women and slaves was enacted and where free men ought to rule. This distinction between the two realms demonstrates the manner in which sovereignty within Athens was exercised and in which inequality among the people of the polis was perpetuated. While the boundaries between the private and political were strictly outlined in 5th century Athens, Antigone with her actions deliberately transgresses

these boundaries by forcefully introducing the private into the political, thus bringing about the destruction of the established order.

Antigone's actions effectively demonstrate that the distinction between the private and the political within the polis is not merely constructed, but also untenable. Mourning, as a practice, has always been conceptualized as a female activity and by the logic of ancient Athens, a practice that ought to be relegated to the private realm. Antigone's defining characteristic in Sophocles' play is the act of mourning, whether it is mourning of her dead brother or of her own impending death. One could claim that the play offers "an insight into why a woman's mourning should be so socially disturbing" (Honig 96), given that Antigone dares to make her act of mourning, not merely an act of a sister lamenting the loss of her brother, but most significantly a political act which is performed in public, upsetting thus the political order. Antigone transforms an inherently private act into a public and political one, blurring in the process the previously strictly separate realms of the female private and the male public.

However, one cannot discuss the extent of Antigone's transgression without first taking the contemporary context into consideration. The transgressive power of mourning and its prohibition, which is so prominent in the play, used to have a real life counterpart within ancient Athens. One only has to return to Solon of Athens, the "sixth century law-giver, poet and politician", whose profound influence helped shape the Athenian polis and whose work had always been a point of reference (Blok and Lardinois 1). Among the laws attributed to Solon were, of course, those regarding funerals and most notably the prohibition of mourning. A number of possible interpretations of these laws have been presented throughout the years, especially when it comes to their possible targets: "limit [ing] the conspicuous display of aristocratic funerals"; furthering "the principle of insomnia"; curbing "political loyalism roused by ostentatious mourning"; or even imposing restrictions to "women's excessive mourning behavior […] for the sake of propriety" (Blok and Lardinois 198). In any case, it becomes obvious that this prohibition was politically motivated, constituting an acknowledgement of the manner in which an act in the private realm enters the political sphere, as well as an attempt to enforce the ultimately untenable separation between the private and political.

This tendency towards mourning persisted, of course, also in the 5th century, when the state undertook the soldiers' funerals, and the funeral oration became a

central feature of the polis mourning its dead. Nicole Loreaux describes the standard form of the orations prominent in that era, as "at once a eulogy of worthy men, an honor accorded to the dead, and a stock of instructive examples", but also "a lesson in civic morality intended for the living" ("The Invention of Athens" 98). The act of mourning, in this case, is not only transferred to the hands of the polis, but is also transformed into a more impersonal activity and, of course, significantly subdued. Perhaps the most prominent example of this transformation of mourning from a private to a public event is Pericles's famous funeral oration, as represented in Thucydides *The History of the Peloponnesian War*. In an attempt to console but also inspire the relatives of the dead soldiers, Pericles stresses the latter's heroism, while simultaneously urging the parents of the dead to forget about them and be consoled by the fact that they will be able to give birth to other children in the future. He mentions: "you will constantly be reminded of your loss by seeing others in the enjoyment of blessings in which you too once took delights; […] but those of you who are still of an age to have offspring should bear upon the hope of other children" (2.44). The intention behind these words is revealed when Pericles notes: "for not only to many of you individually will the children that are born hereafter be a cause of forgetfulness of those who are gone, but the state also will reap a double advantage—it will not be left desolate and it will be secure" (2.44).

The transformation of mourning from an act performed by women towards their dead to an oration meant to console the relatives by praising the valor of the dead was not merely an intervention aimed at encouraging forgetfulness and the substitution of soldiers. There were also gendered parameters that should also be taken into consideration, given that mourning, especially excessive mourning, was conceptualized as an exclusively female preoccupation. The figure of the mourning woman, according to Loraux, was "a threat to be contained" given that its excessiveness could possibly overturn the civic order ("Mothers in Mourning" 11). Women's expected role was, of course, motherhood, which was considered a type of female civic duty towards the polis which they provided with citizens and soldiers ("Mother in Mourning" 12). One may assume, therefore, that when a mother mourns a dead son, she not only discourages forgetfulness, but also openly posits herself against the duty of the soldier, that is to die for the benefit of the polis. It is also interesting to note that, through the prohibition of lamentation, not only did the figure of the mourning mother disappear from public view, but was also completely eliminated

from any type of public discourse. One such case is again Pericles's oration, where mothers, and women in general, seem to be entirely absent, with their presence only implied when Pericles addresses the dead soldiers' parents ("Mother in Mourning" 15-16). Consequently, "by confining private funerals within extremely strict limits, the city regulates mourning and the role played by women in the context of mourning" and thus, by regulating mourning the city effectively regulates women ("Mother in Mourning" 19).

Within this context, Antigone's actions no longer merely signify a duty towards a purely ethical or filial law; they are transformed into an active transgression against the regressive laws of the city which seek to exclude her brother but also herself as a woman. Her dirge, in which she laments both for her brother and herself, demonstrates her inability to substitute her dead brother, contrary to the dominant narrative that strongly encourages amnesia for the benefit of the city: "No second brother can be born for me" (912). Mocking the city's stance on mothers and wives who have lost their sons and husbands, she indicates that this does not hold true for her, considering that it is impossible to apply the rule of substitution to a brother. Furthermore, it is a demonstration of the very excessiveness that was frowned upon and even prohibited in women which nonetheless is expressed publicly in this case, right before her execution. Consequently, mourning as a political act is generated not merely by a sister's need to lament for her dead brother, but moreover encouraged by a prohibition that marginalizes both Antigone, as a female subject within the city, and Polynices, as an enemy and outsider of the polis. Their family ties and their marginalization are consolidated by the lamentation rather than the inverse. It is the "mourning that generates the kinship, rather than kinship, with its supposedly natural close ties, that motivates the mourning" (Honig 21).

3.2 A Marriage with Death: Incestuous Kinship

Besides being one of the strongest social taboos, when we encounter incest in fiction it raises certain crucial questions regarding the human condition. Oedipus' incestuous relationship with his mother is the archetypal case which has inspired a number of thinkers to theorize the phenomenon of incest from a psychoanalytic and

political perspective. However, his daughter Antigone, especially in the last decades, has attracted a lot of critical attention as well and produced various feminist, queer and anti-authoritarian readings. The interest in incest, in the case of Antigone, is predominantly concentrated in Antigone herself being a product of incest and, as in the case of Judith Butler's *Antigone's Claim*, the manner in which she challenges sovereignty and traditional kinship through her unconventional family relations. Incestuous kinship, however, as represented in Sophocles' play, is not confined to Antigone's relation to Oedipus and the manner in which Oedipus' incest has upset the conventional role of each family member within the Labdacyd family, but also extends to Antigone's relationship with her dead brother, Polynices.

A close study of Sophocles' text reveals that Antigone seems fixated on her dead brother, Polynices, to the point that she is willing to not only to defy Creon's decree and bury her traitor brother, but to do so twice. This obsession is often noted by other characters and, at times, by Antigone herself. What is most intriguing, however, is that Antigone's feelings are often associated with an attraction for death itself, a "death wish", one could say. Antigone's repeatedly stated desire for communion with the dead is constantly coupled with her desire to give her brother a proper burial, despite the fact that it puts in danger her own life. Antigone's insistence on burying her brother, regardless of the obstacles, along with her often stated desire for the dead, suggests a kind of incestuous attraction in Antigone towards Polynices. This desire, of course, is forged under the unique circumstances of Polynices' exclusion and Antigone's precarious position after she elects to ignore Creon's decree and would otherwise not exist.

Even without accounting for her incestuous desire for her brother, Antigone's position as a member of Labdacyd family places her in an already peculiar situation. Judith Butler mentions that "Antigone represents not kinship in its ideal form but its deformation and displacement", while also questioning "what sustaining web of relations makes our lives possible" (24). In other words, Antigone's kinship status is often a confusing one because of the dual role that family members assume due to incest. Jocasta, the mother, is also a grandmother; Oedipus is both father and brother. There is no clarity or stability in this generation because it is an "anti-generation", as Antigone's own name suggests (Butler 22). Ultimately, Butler argues that Antigone's kin could serve as a stepping stone for the acceptance and integration of families that do not fulfill the traditional heteronormative patriarchal model of a family. This

theory is not so much a defense of incestuous families, but rather an occasion to reflect on non-traditional and even marginalized family units.

Being included in a generation that already bears the mark of Oedipus's curse and already socially stigmatized, it is only natural for Antigone to wish to be even more fixated on her relatives. This fixation on her mostly dead family is translated into a desire for death itself. As Sjoholm notes, "There is a perverted desire for death in her actions, a desire caused by the dead themselves" (71). This emerges not only from our general understanding of Antigone's obsession with her dead brother, but also something noted by Creon himself: "Tis labor lost, to revere the dead" and "Die then, and love the dead if love thou must" (780, 525). He even explicitly mentions that she is a worshiper of Hades, the god of the dead (777). The above utterances indicate that, for Creon at least, Antigone's insistence on burying her brother is indeed abnormal, especially when we consider that it means sacrificing her life and her progeny.

The point where the incestuous undertones and theirs associations with death become more prominent is of course Antigone's lamentation that comes right before her imprisonment and eventual death. She exclaims: "O grave, O bridal bower, O prison house hewn from the rock, my everlasting home" (891). It should be noted here that Antigone had an already guaranteed future with Heamon, with whom she was expected to fulfill her duty as a woman, that is, find her "bridal bower" and her "everlasting home". Nevertheless, Antigone seems to deliberately and consciously abandon all of this and instead, chooses another type of marriage, that with death. This "marriage" is also understood by her as a union with her dead kin, as she claims that "Whither I go to join the mighty host of kinsfolk, Persephassa's guests long dead" where she shall find "a welcome from […] my brother dear", along with the rest of the family (893-894, 899). If the link between union with the dead and marriage is not clear enough, Antigone goes on to claim that her brother is irreplaceable and even more important for her than a prospective husband and children. Although, as was previously indicated, this claim might constituted a deliberate indictment of the rule of substitution which was promoted at the time by the polis to ensure the city's military strength, taken at face value, it bears witness to Antigone symbolically substituting a hypothetical husband—who in this case is implied to be Heamon—with her brother.

Following Lacan, Sjoholm explains this fusion of death and marriage as Antigone confusing "the rights of the dead with the desire of the dead—contaminated by their desire, going one step beyond piety of sisterly duty because the signifier she claims as the cause of her action, the rights of the dead, is the desire of her dead brother operating in her" (104). For Lacan, Antigone's desire might not be reducible to the death drive however, since the desire that she sports for her dead brother is partly caused by the dead brother himself. It is interesting, though, to examine the manner in which this desire comes into being, which is of course related to the law of prohibition. According to Sjoholm, again, Creon's decree which was intended to save the city from contamination, ultimately becomes the source of such contamination: "Creon's barring of the dead from the living may be intended to save the city from contamination, but instead it awakens the excessive forces proper to the dynamics of tragedy" (105). Thus, what reinforces the incestuous undertones of Antigone's desire to bury her brother is the very law that prohibits it.

Ultimately, even if Antigone's desire is not politically motivated, it is certainly politically produced. Antigone's actions do not take place outside sovereignty and they are certainly not strictly confined to familial relationships. As Butler puts it, Antigone "exposes the socially contingent character of kinship" by adopting the methods and language "of sovereign authority and action" (6). Somewhat contrary to what Sjoholm has argued above, one could claim as well that the desire towards the dead brother is not the cause, but rather the manner in which transgression against an unjust law gets translated into the play. Incest itself could thus be conceptualized as any type of aporia arising from oppressive systems that in turn gives birth to behaviors that are capable of destabilizing and exposing their unstable roots.

3.3 Incest and the Foundations of the Polis

Family in 5th century Athens was evidently a strictly private affair. The private and the political were not realms merely segregated from one another, but rather the affairs of one realm were not even allowed to be expressed within the other. This is a reality often reflected in tragedies and comedies as well, given their public and very political character. As Konstan observes, they "do not permit the audience to peer

inside the houses of the characters on stage, and orators only rarely describe events or conversations that have occurred within the home" (107). On the one hand, the private space is represented as a sacred space with the events that occur within it remaining secret, and, on the other, as a space unworthy of intrusion and incorporation into the political sphere. Antigone's actions, as was demonstrated previously, constitute a transgression precisely because she dares to invade the political realm with a strictly private affair, that of a brother's death and mourning.

However, Antigone's intrusion into the political sphere is not achieved only through her act of mourning, but also through her extreme devotion to her dead brother. This "misplaced" devotion which drives the events of the tragedy does not transgress the boundaries merely by encouraging Antigone to mourn in public, thereby introducing a very private practice into the political realm; filial love itself is a supremely private affair. The kinship between Antigone and Polynices with all its incestuous undertones, establishes a relationship that is overly obsessed with the family and the personal relationships among its members to a degree that it overrides the needs of the political. While the private and the political realm, as evidenced in the work of Aristotle, are supposed to fulfill different needs, with the private assumed to be inferior to the political, in *Antigone* the private is not only of equal significance, but implied to be superior and thus placed at the centre of the tragic conflict. Incest, in brief, elevates the importance of the private to the point where it uncomfortably exposes its relevance to the political.

Incest also exposes the interrelation of family and polis through the hindering of the successful reproduction of the citizenry. Incest is not merely a cultural phenomenon, but also has a biological dimension, given its tendency to produce children with genetic defects (Wolf 3). The genetic disadvantages which attend incestuous reproduction lend biological justification to the incest taboo, with society promoting laws that ensure that its members do not suffer from any such defects, such as the prohibition of marriage between first and second degree relatives. Antigone, thus, challenges the polis not only by elevating her filial relations, but also by denying the polis its genetically guaranteed continuation. By choosing Polynices, Antigone implicitly rejects Heamon, her future husband, and the possible continuation of the Labdacid generation. It is only fitting that the curse of her family, which began with incest, shall eventually meet its end again with incest.

In *Antigone*, the close, almost incestuous kinship between brother and sister serves a number of purposes. It is the means through which the problematic foundations of 5th century Athens are exposed, and in particular the manner in which the polis viewed its citizens as potential soldiers for imperialist wars, as well as the way it oppressed and confined women through the mourning laws. However, viewed more widely, it encapsulates the ways society controls its members in order to maintain its power, paradoxically driving individuals to transgress the boundaries it sets. This transgression may sometimes take extreme forms, such as that of incest, which is not only opposed to established cultural mores, but also threatens the propagation of the community itself. Thus, the incest theme in *Antigone* reveals the unstable foundation of the polis in a multitude of ways.

4. *Wuthering Heights*: The Subversive Power of the Sibling Bond

Wuthering Heights finds itself on the threshold between the Romantic and the Victorian era, two historical and artistic periods that represent two entirely opposing worldviews to the common mind. Romanticism is associated with the privileging of emotion, imagination, and nature; while the Victorian era is associated with rationality, realism and progress. Emily Bronte's only novel demonstrates both of these eras' prominent preoccupations as it succeeds in being "at once imaginatively audacious and tenaciously realistic" (Eagleton xiv). The ambiguous position that the novel occupies in the history of English literature, along with its tendency to depict curiously unsympathetic characters, intense emotions and its seeming aversion to any clear cut morality, transform it into a uniquely complex novel that has been a perennial challenge to literary and cultural critics alike.

The novel's "nakedness from the web of familiar morality and manners" (17), as Dorothy Van Ghent notes, and its overall strangeness, invite a number of different interpretations. The novel's most notable departure from conventional manners, and much more so contemporary morality, is the story's depiction of incestuous relationships. A close examination of the relations among the characters represented within the story reveals that everyone is part of the same extended family, to which, of course, intermarriage plays a significant role. Apart from Mr. Lockwood and Nelly Dean, all the characters, prominently featured within the novel, are to some degree either cousins or siblings, who are almost isolated in Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange respectively. The secluded world of *Wuthering Heights* only accentuates the incestuous type of kinship that seems favored by its members. In spite of the isolation of the setting of the novel—the Yorkshire moors—the community that is formed tends to replicate the dynamics of the "outside" world and sometimes with increased intensity. Patriarchal relations are prominent, with women being at the mercy of their fathers or their male guardians' power. They are unable to inherit and achieve any type of independence, something that ultimately leads to tragedy, not only for themselves but also for the whole community.

Undoubtedly, however, the most important relationship in the novel is that between Heathcliff and Catherine, two ostensibly unrelated characters who are raised as siblings while being marginalized in some manner by the society in which they live. Although unconsummated, their relationship is undeniably erotic and consuming, ultimately leading to their demise, with Catherine's premature death and Heathcliff's descent into villainy. Their feelings for each other, although depicted in terms of the ideal Romantic union between two souls, not only suggest an incestuous relationship, but could also be said to spring from their position as oppressed subjects within the community presented in the novel and 19th century society as a whole. This chapter attempts to shed light on the nature of Catherine and Heathcliff's relationship and especially the manner in which it could be compared to the relationship between Antigone and Polynices in Sophocles' tragedy. Moreover, the respective positions of Heathcliff and Catherine within Victorian society will be examined in order to discover the possible link between their (semi-)incestuous relationship, and the degree to which it is a product of the very forces that try to marginalize it.

4.1 Catherine and Heathcliff: Is it Incest?

The nature of the relationship between Catherine Earnshaw and Heathcliff, especially the question of sibling incest between the two protagonists, has been the subject of much critical debate. The incest theory is either rejected on the basis of Heathcliff's position as an adoptive brother, or accepted based on the possibility of Heathcliff's being a step-brother to Catherine from another mother. On the other hand, the question of whether the two protagonists are related by blood is not the most crucial in a discussion of incest. More important is that they are both raised as siblings and their relationship could be conceptualized as incestuous, at least on a symbolic level. In addition, there is also the looming question of Heathcliff's origins whose racial and social ambiguity compounds a possibly incestuous situation with cultural fears of miscegenation. Whatever side of the argument one weighs in with, it is evident that the novel features what Pauline Nestor describes as a certain "flirtation with the fundamental taboos," of which incest plays a central role (xxix).

The approach that wishes to absolve Catherine and Heathcliff's relationship of any incestuous implications seems to focus primarily on their lack of blood ties. Regardless of whether incestuous references in *Wuthering Heights* are explicit enough for a casual reader to perceive, the general themes of the novel as well as the type of relationships it privileges are enough to establish the theme of incest as intrinsic to the story. Kinship is an important aspect of the novel, given that almost all the characters are related to each other or, at least, have been raised under the same roof. Even Nelly Dean, the narrator and servant of the Earnshaw family, has grown up alongside the children of the family she has served, belonging to the same generation as they. William R. Goetz indicates that the relationships of the characters are characterized by "closeness or inbredness," with limited interaction taking place between them and outsiders—except of course for Lockwood who is somewhat sidelined for the greater part of the novel (352). Even the family members' names seem to be reproduced from generation to generation with little variation, making the story sometimes difficult to follow for a first-time reader. Within such an environment, it would be a misreading to claim that no familial kinship exists between Catherine and Heathcliff. DiPlacidi emphasizes this point by drawing attention to the strong identification between the lead couple, which is of course made explicit by Catherine's declaration: "I am Heathcliff!" (Bronte 82). As DiPlacidi notes, to strip this identification of any incestuous implications would therefore represent "a denial of their love and a reduction of it to pathological egotism" (119).

A popular theory that has been used to establish an even more concrete incestuous situation in the novel is that of Heathcliff being the illegitimate child of Mr. Earnshaw. While no explicit references in the story point in this direction, it is easy to understand the reason why many critics have come to support it. At the beginning of her story, Nelly Dean notes that Heathcliff "was the name of a son who died in childhood "and was later given to the newcomer child (Bronte 38). His name coupled with the unusual preference that Mr. Earnshaw exhibits towards him, even to the detriment of his own children, has led many to the assumption that Heathcliff was not merely a random orphan that Mr. Earnshaw pitied and picked up from the streets, but rather a son born out of wedlock, whose status as illegitimate has to remain secret. This is a theory which is quite disputed, considering the lack of supporting evidence. Corbett's argument against it indicates that a mere preference to someone outside the

family does not necessarily imply a secret biological relation. As she claims: "As if a man might not prefer a biologically unrelated child to his own kin" (25).

Moreover, incestuous relations were not foreign to Victorian society. Marriage among cousins was, in fact, a pretty common occurrence. Mary Jean Corbett argues that, especially as represented in nineteenth century fiction, marriage with someone outside the family signals "the perceived perils of intimacy with strangers", as well as the less "compelling alternative to the romance between strangers" (vii). The union between a man and a woman of the same family usually provides a sense of familiarity and safety, especially when it comes to members by whom one has grown up, namely "cousins, in-laws, or figurative adoptees" (Corbett vii). It is evident that modern notions concerning incest are not applicable to Victorian, and nineteenth century in general, relationships considering that incest among relatives wan not only accepted, but oftentimes the preferred option.

When discussing incest, one should also take into consideration the obvious Romantic influences that inform Bronte's novel, namely the Romantics' tendency to romanticize incest. Alan Richardson mentions that "for the Romantic poets [...] the emphasis is on a shared childhood, on experience that unites the couple through countless mutual associations built up during the most idyllic stage of life" (739). He also points out the manner in which "a relation between a foster-brother and sister often has the same ramifications as one between blood relatives" (739). Richardson's claims concerning the depiction of incest by the Romantics fits Catherine and Heathcliff's situation—two adopted siblings with a possible blood relation who form a strong bond during childhood—almost perfectly. Childhood is, of course, to a certain degree, also idealized and represented as the only time when the relationship between the central couple could ever be harmonious. The socialization involved in growing up, marrying and getting involved in the affairs of the community deprives Catherine and Heathcliff's childhood love of the possibility of fulfillment, forcing it to become warped and twisted. Again, there exists the Romantic idea of rejecting society as something inherently corrupting, while a return to childhood and nature is considered desirable and ideal.

4.2 The Social and the Pre-Social

Following the Romantic tradition, *Wuthering Heights* is also a novel intent on idealizing the innocence of childhood and stigmatizing the entrance into adulthood. For the Romantics, of course, childhood itself bears close ties with a pre-social realm, often associated with nature, while adulthood is associated with the social realm, signifying the loss of innocence and the entrance into a realm of corruption and brutality. The entrance to the social realm is, to a certain extent, a development for both Catherine and Heathcliff. Their childhood is represented as an almost idyllic period of their lives, which is later ruined once they enter adulthood. Childhood, as represented in the novel, is idealized to a degree that has lead some critics to make parallels between *Wuthering Heights* and Milton's *Paradise Lost*, referring to Bronte's novel as a radical revision of Milton's well known work (Gilbert and Gubar 252). In other words, Catherine and Heathcliff are paralleled to Adam and Eve experiencing the fall and being expelled from the realm of heaven to the harsh reality of the earth. However, the pattern of the idyllic childhood and the corrupted adulthood is not only a pattern evocative of Milton's poetry, but also, if viewed from a more realistic lens, it renders the cause of their demise much clearer.

Recalling the Romantic influences in the novel, it is quite easy to comprehend the polarity of the pre-social and social that exists in the story. Nature and childhood are idealized, as can be evidenced by Catherine and Heathcliff's constant escapes to the moors, while society along with its systems is understood as a place of corruption and separation. Arguably, the moment that their idyllic childhood relationship starts to deteriorate is when they come into contact with the people living outside Wuthering Heights, meaning the Lintons. The Lintons are represented as significantly more cultured, genteel and "proper" by society's standards, a stark contrast to the harsh reality of Wuthering Heights. "Thrushcross Grange reproduces the hierarchical chain of being that Western culture traditionally proposes as heaven's decree" (Gilbert and Gubar 274). From the raw world of Wuthering Heights to the cultured one of Thrushcross Grange, Catherine abandons the freedom of childhood and enters the world of patriarchal repression.

Heathcliff, however, meets quite a different fate. Heathcliff's descent is not so much a journey of repression, but rather of assimilation into patriarchy and capitalism. Daniela Garofalo argues that Heathcliff, by the end of the novel is fully transformed

into a Victorian capitalist: "the hard-headed producer and capitalist who is more concerned with acquisition than enjoyment of commodities" (823). This is an approach that reflects his attitude to both objects and people. His intense desire for revenge motivates him to gain possession of both Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, something that can only be achieved through turning other people, especially women into commodities of exchange. He marries Isabella and keeps young Catherine confined to Wuthering Heights, not because of any affection towards them, but because they are the means of acquiring the commodities he desires. In that manner, Heathcliff with his low status and years of subjugation to the oppressive patriarchal figure of Hindley, instead of liberating himself from these structures, rather elects to adopt them and become the oppressor.

There exists an obvious correspondence between the social and pre-social situation that Heathcliff and Catherine are entrapped and the distinction between the private and public life that Aristotle and Arendt, among others, have theorized. The private realm similarly to the pre-social, is the space closely related to the natural and the primal, where children are confined, uninfluenced by the outside social world, at least until coming of age. Moreover, both the pre-social and the private are visualized as separate from the social and the political, respectively, with any interference or intermixing between the two realms deemed as degeneration. It is worth noting, however, that while thinkers like Aristotle or Arendt tend to elevate the political as the space where human beings can realize their full potential, the Romantics, as was indicated above, tended to idealize the pre-social, private realm of childhood, associated with innocence and nature. The distinction is a strictly binary one, whether it comes from the Romantics or other thinkers.

However, in the case of incest, the private interfuses with the public, while the political informs the private. Silvia Federici, as has already been noted, has expressed the manner in which in modern capitalism the private, "feminine" realm ultimately serves "the reproduction of the workforce" and the manner in which "the body" is transformed "into a work-machine" (63). Moreover, Michel Foucault tends to describe the family unit as a mere extension of societal forces and inevitably bears their footprint. One could argue that if the private and the political are thus connected, shouldn't the social and pre-social—associated with adulthood and childhood, respectively—be similarly conceptualized as inseparable? Indeed, adulthood cannot subsist without childhood: human beings begin as children who naturally progress to

adults and who, nevertheless, retain the impact of childhood which has shaped them into the individuals they are. There is no specific point when the child is abruptly transformed into the adult, but rather an entrance into adulthood through a gradual abandonment of childhood, which is however never completely erased. Child and adult must therefore be seen as aspects of the same individual, just as the private and the political two facets of the same society. Catherine and Heathcliff may have felt ostensibly liberated in childhood, but that was more in imagination than in reality. Heathcliff was still an outsider to the family in all respects except in his relationship with Catherine's, and Catherine herself was not as beloved by her family as she would have been, had she conformed to her feminine role.

4.3 *Wuthering Heights* and *Antigone*: Affiliated Texts

Within the narrative of *Wuthering Heights*, Heathcliff is undoubtedly understood as a sibling and a member of the Earnshaw family. Consequently, his relationship with Catherine as established in the novel could be conceived as an incestuous one which ultimately undermines the communal order. Seen from this perspective, there emerges a close correlation between the central relationship represented in *Wuthering Heights* and that found in Sophocles' tragedy with both illustrating the way the transgressive nature of incestuous kinship may function in a way that destabilizes the established order. *Antigone* and *Wuthering Heights* can also be compared politically vis a vis their central characters: Heathcliff and Polynices, on one hand, may be viewed as both intruders and integral members of their respective families, both external subversive forces and a parts of the community that isolates itself from the outside world. Antigone and Catherine, on the other hand, occupy liminal positions as well, due to their female status irrespective of their rebellious behaviour. Their gender position subjects them to oppression, whether they elect to conform or rebel against societal standards. In other words, instead of seeking to "Oedipalize" the text, as Deleuze and Guattari have often accused a number of psychoanalysts and theorists of doing, this essay seeks to "Antigonize" the familial bonds present.

4.3.1 Polynices and Heathcliff: The Stranger Within

The figure of the dead Polynices in Sophocles' tragedy is of great theatrical interest, given that despite his absence from the action of the play, his effect on the plot is immense. He is the reason behind Antigone's decision to transgress an unjust law, effectively setting the events of the plot into motion. Furthermore, Polynices is also quite an ambiguous figure: he is presented as the enemy of the city, the one who launched an attack against Thebes in order to gain the throne for himself. However, he is very much part of that city as regards his lineage: he is the son of Oedipus, the former king of Thebes, the nephew of the current monarch, Creon, and, of course, the brother of Antigone. Thus, although Polynices is an invader that openly wages war against the city, his close ties to the royal family of Thebes cannot be ignored. Consequently, Antigone's transgression does not merely rest on her desire to bury her brother, but her desire to bury the brother who is also the enemy. Polynices, as a character, balances between kinship and foreignness that is, someone who upsets the order of the family and the polis while also originating from the aforementioned family and polis. His ambiguity is what introduces the conflict which ultimately causes the demise of the other characters in the tragedy.

Heathcliff finds himself in a similar situation. Heathcliff belongs to the Earnshaw family and the bond he forms, chiefly, with Catherine is one between siblings. Whether he is biologically related to the Earnshaws or not, is of little importance in this case, given that, as Mary Jean Corbett asserts, "the novel mostly resists a narrowly biological conception of the family." Consequently, the lack of a biological bond "does not exclude [Heathcliff] from membership in the Wuthering Heights family" (Corbett 26). However, the fact that he belongs to the Earnshaw family does not mean that he is fully integrated into it as an equal member. It is not only that Heathcliff is an adoptive family member, but also different in terms of class and, debatably, race. In contrast to the middle-class Earnshaws, he originates from the working class background of Liverpool, while it is also heavily implied that he is not a native of Britain but is racially different. He therefore functions as an intermediary between friend and foe, who both belongs and does not belong.

It has been mentioned that Heathcliff could be perceived as an outsider because of his class and race. His class origins are pretty explicit in the novel, considering that he is introduced as "a dirty, ragged, black-haired child" who "repeated gibberish that nobody could understand" (Bronte 36-37). Mr Earnshaw relates his finding Heathcliff as "starving, and houseless, and as good as dumb in the streets of Liverpool" (Bronte 37). It is also interesting how Bronte makes an explicit reference to the city of Liverpool in connection to Heathcliff, a city in which, according to Winifred Gerin, a lot of Irish immigrants landed and were "dying in the cellars of the warehouses on the quays", as well as the centre of "starving immigrant children" (226). Heathcliff's origins, in a few words, are both implicitly and explicitly established as not merely working class, but almost underclass. Later, his low social status would be a decisive factor for Catherine to reject the idea of marriage with him, in spite of her confessing her love and identification with him.

The question of race, however, is significantly thornier than the question of class, especially since, the other characters' observations reading Heathcliff's foreign origins remain speculative. Bronte elects to never specify his place of birth or race, encouraging the other characters to freely speculate on these. However, it must be noted that Heathcliff is described in terms of foreignness to such a degree that the reader cannot help but visualize him as racially other. This is most notably showcased in Heathcliff's and Catherine's first encounter with the Linton household. It is the moment when he is "scrutinized through spectacles, and pronounced upon as if he were a specimen of some strange animal species" (Meyer 160). Isabella likens him presumably to a gypsy given that she describes him as similar "the son of the fortune-teller" who apparently "stole [her] tame pheasant". This is not an unfitting comparison on the part of the Lintons considering that they had previously remarked how "the villain scowls so plainly in his face". It is even suggested that it would be "a kindness to the country to hang him at one" in order to avoid the certain ill fortune that his character would inevitably bring to him and those around him (Bronte 50). It gradually becomes apparent that Heathcliff's character and future development is immediately outlined, merely by looking to his face and determining whether his features are acceptable to the Lintons', and by extension to the British in general. Susan Meyer notes that this is the moment when "Heathcliff is subjected to the potent gaze of a racial arrogance deriving from British imperialism" (160). In other words, despite the fact that Heathcliff's race may remain a mystery to characters and even to

the reader, the discourse employed to describe his dark complexion is undoubtedly racially charged.

Racial discourse is an overlooked aspect of incest as well. It is no coincidence that incest has been linked to the fear of miscegenation to a degree that some may claim that the word itself "has an etymological connection to the concept of racial purity" (Barnes 360). Interestingly so, there seems to exist the opposite explanation of incest itself being synonymous to miscegenation and opposed to racial purity (Barnes 360-361). In both cases the fear of racial impurity is prominent, especially after considering that the word incest derives from a Latin root meaning, impure or unchaste (Sollors 287). Werner Sollors offers a thorough etymology of the word incest, finding it deriving from and related to words such as caste; "a synonym of race and lineage, and for a 'system of rigid social stratification characterized by hereditary status, endogamy, and social barriers sanctioned by custom, law, or religion'" (287). Distinctions related to class and race, consequently, become an intrinsic part of incest, to such a degree that they define it. Simultaneously, while incestuous relations are created by normative societal constructions, they also tend to undermine them.

Heathcliff's position as a marginalized subject is not dependent solely on his class or on his presumed race alone, but rather on a combination of the two. Although his racial characteristics would have restricted his social circle in Britain to that of the working or underclass, as the novel progresses, Heathcliff acquires the status of a gentleman—at least in terms of property and wealth if not in terms of manners and education. This development urges Heathcliff not only to seek revenge against those who wronged and tyrannized him in his youth, but also, to become an oppressor and a tyrant himself and reduce his former oppressors to the status he occupied before. Thus, it would be a mistake to claim that Heathcliff's situation could be explained through an exclusively class or racial lens.

4.3.2 Catherine and Antigone: Disobedient Sisters

Although Heathcliff's ambivalent identity and status is undoubtedly a decisive factor in the events that take place in the novel, it would be a mistake to focus our attention solely on him. The other part of the equation, Catherine, is also a parameter

that, along with Heathcliff, forms the central conflict of the plot. Although less marginalized than Heathcliff and relatively privileged due to her middle-class status and Britishness, Catherine's gender places her in a fairly disadvantageous position that significantly limits her choices and possibilities in life. Together with the class differences between her and Heathcliff, it is their common marginalization which triggers the tragic outcome to their love story. On the other hand and most significantly for our purposes, the marginalization they both suffer under the same roof ultimately creates the strong bong between the two adoptive siblings.

The Earnshaw household is heavily informed by patriarchal hierarchies and social mandates. It is structured around the figure of the father who is in complete charge of the family. This becomes apparent early on in the novel, when Mr. Earnshaw brings Heathcliff to the house, despite his wife's objections, and is quite determined that the boy will stay. When the father is absent, or in this case dead, authority is assumed by the eldest male relative in the house, most commonly the eldest son, in this case, Hindley. Patriarchal power, however, is not confined to the paternal or brotherly figure. Josef Allen Boone notes there is a "recurrent figure of the oppressive male master" (128) in the novel, and this is particularly relevant to Heathcliff's persona after Catherine's death. Boone reads this as revealing Bronte's "opposition to the dominant sexual ideology" (127), and it has often been noted that *Wuthering Heights* is a novel about marriage which does not hesitate to condemn the inequality endemic to it, wishing thereby to demystify domestic life.

Catherine, as a character, seems quite unconventional for a woman of her time, refusing to become compliant or subservient as was expected of her. The reader is first introduced to her as a child asking her father to bring her back a whip as a gift from his travels. As Nelly remarks, Catherine "was hardly six years old, but she could ride any horse in the stable, and she chose a whip" (Bronte 36). Thus, from her first appearance, Catherine is established as a sort of tomboy, with unruly behavior for a girl, who prefers physical, outdoor activities rather than the typically feminine ones. This atypical behavior, at least when it comes to the dominant views concerning gender roles, does not merely mark her as a transgressor of her feminine role, but also negatively impacts on her family relations. Nelly, again, observes the manner in which she was deprived of her father's favor, exactly because she "was too mischievous and wayward for a favourite" (Bronte 38). In fact, Nelly Dean seems constantly disapproving of Catherine, almost as much as Heathcliff: "Her spirits were

always at high-water-mark, her tongue always going- singing, laughing, and plaguing everybody who would not do the same" (Bronte 42). It is easy to see how two misfits like Catherine and Heathcliff would find communion in each other's company.

Catherine's marginalized status is naturally the result of a patriarchal family system that wishes to control all its members, especially its female members. Considering that Catherine's decisions are affected by the patriarchal expectations that she has to fulfill and significantly restrict her actions, it should come as no surprise that Catherine justifies her decision to marry Edgar Linton despite being devoted to Heathcliff on the grounds that: "If the wicked man in there had not brought Heathcliff so low, I shouldn't have thought of it. It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff, now" (Bronte 81). At first glance, it seems that Catherine rejects the possibility of marriage with Heathcliff because of his low social status. However, from another point of view, her rejection of Heathcliff could also be interpreted as an acknowledgement of their vulnerability within an economic system in which a woman is entirely dependent on her husband. Thus, the fact that Heathcliff is without economic and social prospects leads Catherine to the reasonable conclusion that, once married, they would be condemned to live in poverty and misery. Nonetheless, even the "proper" marriage with Edgar that Catherine finds herself in proves no happier or more liberating. Boone notes the manner in which Catherine's development opposes itself to the "traditional female bildungsroman, in which the heroine's acquisition of mature identity is confirmed by marriage" (132). Thus, from the moment she enters the Linton household, the reader witnesses the manner in which Catherine is forced to tame her "wild" nature in order to become a proper lady. This highlights the fact that, for a woman in Catherine's position, there is no escape from a patriarchal structure which either dominates or punishes her for her rebellion. Catherine's story, consequently, is not one of psychological development but rather of decline.

In a certain sense, Catherine's development throughout the novel reflects what theorists and philosophers like Friedrich Engels and Sylvia Federici have already argued in their respective works. From a certain perspective, through Catherine, the reader bears witness to the manner in which the position of the woman has developed through the ages. Following Engels in combination with Romantic convictions on the ideal of pre-sociality, one could claim that the freedom and innocence that Catherine experiences as a child reflects primitive eras when gender equality was prevalent and before the woman was reduced to an asset of the patriarchal family. Catherine's

famous exclamation discloses her desire for an earlier, freer time: “I wish I were a girl again, half savage and hardy, and free… and laughing at injuries, not maddening under them!” (Bronte 125). The whole section is an acknowledgement by Catherine herself on the manner in which aspects of her life have been repressed, especially after entering adulthood.

Heathcliff may act as an inverse Antigone, electing to unearth his beloved from her tomb and longing to meet her in death, but, taking the above into consideration, as a woman Antigone seems to resemble Catherine in a more realistic manner. The inescapability from oppressive patriarchal structures, as well as from the forces of a repressive state reflects Antigone’s position and struggle throughout the tragedy. While Catherine confronts the oppressive power structures of her era indirectly, through defying acceptable societal mores addressed to women, Antigone’s transgressions feel more material, given that she directly confronts the power structures that repress her. Creon is the embodiment both of the state law imposed upon Antigone, barring her from burying her brother, as well as the patriarchal force that wishes for her to acknowledge her position as a woman and retreat from the political sphere. Her rebellion, as it was indicated in the previous chapter, chiefly rests upon her setting herself against the state law; whether explicitly, by burying Polynices against Creon’s decree, or implicitly, through her undermining the order of the polis through her mourning and insistence on the singularity of the dead. In spite of her transgressions, however, Antigone’s fate would not have improved significantly, even if she had acted in a subservient manner. Considering that Sophocles’ play contains elements of fifth century Athenian morals, it would be safe to assume that Antigone’s status is expected to be that of an obedient wife confined at home.

As we have seen from these literary works, the sibling relationships that develop from marginalization and prohibition often produce resistance, even to the point of the overthrow of the established order. The law that thrusts them into the precarious position of marginalized subjects is the same law that also forbids them from harboring incestuous desires for each other. Similarly, the system that encourages exclusion and pre-assigned roles is the same that invites the transgressors to react and revolt against it. The protagonists of both *Wuthering Heights* and *Antigone* exhibit this transgressive tendency, while simultaneously affirming the law through their transgression. Indeed, Sophocles’ play and Emily Bronte’s novel can be seen as perfect examples of the human desire for liberation from oppressive societal

structures, as well as those forces, psychological and political, pushing for the re-establishment of the status quo. Moreover, incest can be said to mirror this paradox, in that it constitutes a reproduction of the oppressive society's obsession with self—an almost incestuous desire to expel the other, the outsider, anybody different and commit itself to a reproduction of the same. Thus, it can be argued that incest, both figuratively, in the context of politics, and literally, when it comes to familial bonds, constitutes an ambivalent phenomenon since it is both transgressive and affirmative of the law.

5. Conclusion

Literature might not be identical to reality, but it does reflect it in a number of ways. Oftentimes, complex ethical and social questions can be explored utilizing fiction and its conventions, thus avoiding an immediate confrontation with a taboo or highly contentious subject. This could be the case with sibling incest as it pertains to the two texts examined herein: Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* and Sophocles' *Antigone*. In spite of their seeming irreconcilability, they implicitly or explicitly challenge common notions concerning the nature of the family and its relation to politics and society at large. These works' societal and political critique, however, is not direct but rather by proxy. Incest is transformed into a vehicle which, precisely because of its taboo nature, implicitly functions so as to expose problematic aspects of society.

The incestuous kinship that exists between the semi-siblings, Catherine and Heathcliff and the siblings, Antigone and Polynices, is fashioned in such a manner that their marginalized status is brought into the foreground. One or both of the siblings in these texts faces some form of oppression that urges them to find community in their fellow sibling. Antigone and Catherine are both women living in extremely patriarchal societies that expect them to fulfill their feminine duty. Regardless of their transgression or conformance to social mores, the position of these characters is restricted due to their female object-position. Polynices and Heathcliff function as intermediaries between friend and foe, insider and outsider, who ultimately function as catalysts for the destruction that follows. Despite their kinship status, Heathcliff's otherness and Polynices's identification as an enemy of Thebes place them in a liminal position of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion. Both siblings, in each case, experience some form of marginalization that ultimately forces them to seek solidarity in each other.

Interpreting the relations between the aforementioned siblings as incestuous allows the oppression each of them faces to be accentuated. It highlights the problematics of both family and society, as well as the ways the two are interrelated, each one influencing and informing the other. Finally, by emphasizing society's

obsession with self and its preservation of the status quo through insularity, incest can be said to upset the normative order to the degree that it reaffirms it.

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Περίληψη

Οι συγγενικές σχέσεις βασισμένες στην αιμομιξία είναι αδιάρρηκτα συνδεδεμένες με την παράβαση των κοινωνικών και ηθικών αξιών, κυρίως λόγω της φύσης τους ως ταμπού. Δεδομένης της διαταραγμένης φύσης του, η αιμομιξία έχει την δυνατότητα να κατευθύνει την προσοχή μας προς τις πολιτικές της οικογένειας, όπως επίσης και τις πολιτικές της κοινωνίας που την περικυκλώνει. Αυτή είναι επίσης η περίπτωση με την Αντιγόνη του Σοφοκλή και τα Ανεμοδαρμένα Ύψη της Έμιλι Μπροντέ. Σε αυτά τα δύο κείμενα πρωτοστατούν αδέλφια- ή θετά αδέλφια- των οποίων η έντονη αφοσίωση του ενός στον άλλο, καταλήγει στην διάλυση της κοινότητας που του περιβάλει. Η Αντιγόνη και η Κάθριν Έρνσο είναι κατεξοχήν παραδείγματα «ανυπάκουων» που παραβιάζουν κάθε όριο του θηλυκού του ρόλου και τελικώς τιμωρούνται. Ο Χίθκλιφ και ο Πολυνείκης μπορεί να μη μοιράζονται πολλά εκ πρώτης όψεως παρ' 'όλα αυτά, η ασαφής θέση που κατέχουν τόσο ως μέλη όσο και αποδιοπομπαίοι τράγοι της οικογένειας προκαλεί σημαντική αναταραχή. Η σχεδόν εμμονική σχέση που αναπτύσσεται μεταξύ των αδελφών προκαλείται όσο και δίνει έμφαση στο έλλειμμα της κάθε κοινωνίας, ενώ παράλληλα επιβεβαιώνει το κατεστημένο με το να το σπρώχνει στα όρια του. Αυτή η μελέτη προσπαθεί να ενώσει το έργο της Μπροντέ και του Σοφοκλή σε μία προσπάθεια να εξερευνήσει τον πιθανώς ανατρεπτικό χαρακτήρα της αιμομιξίας μεταξύ αδερφών και να αποκαλύψει τις δυνάμεις που διευκολύνουν τέτοιου είδους σχέσεις.